Interview with Mari-Luci Jaramillo

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AMBASSADOR MARI-LUCI JARAMILLO

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Q: Ambassador Jaramillo, you are in the unique position of being our only Hispanic-American Ambassador. And, as such, your experiences are very important to study. I wonder if you would tell me a little bit about your family and your grandparents, where you were born, your early years, that sort of thing.

JARAMILLO: Okay. Let's see what I remember. I was born in Las Vegas, New Mexico, a little town in northern New Mexico of about 14,000 people. My mother was one of those Hispanic women whose parents had come here during the time of the Spaniards. The Spaniards went way back in her family. Grandparents' names appear in history books. The grandfather's name was Ruiz, R-U-I-Z. On my father's side, my father had been born in Durango, Mexico. Had come here as a young man of about 16. So, I have both traditional Spanish and the Mexican culture.

Although I identified all my life, even as a youngster, as a Mexican-American, for some reason evidently, that culture was stronger in the sense that the language was much more intact; it was current; they had new vocabulary. I was fascinated with the language as a child. I grew up at a time when you were severely punished in school for speaking

Spanish. So, all these things came together for me. My father had a shoe shop and so he was in constant interaction with people that spoke English. So, although his English was accented, he had a very wide vocabulary and he read a lot. My mother's Spanish was a Spanish of a person not well read, yet her Spanish had all the old Spanish that the Spanish had brought here. So, I really grew up speaking dialects of Spanish and that strengthened my interest in the language.

I don't recall my grandparents' name on my father's side. Their family was killed in the Mexican Revolution and my father had come with that group in about 1910. I do know that one of the grandmothers was a Velasquez and another one was a Gauna. I know that my father had an uncle who was named Arturo. My father's surname, my maiden name, was Antuna, A-N-T-U-N-A. We know that an uncle came to the United States and that he lived somewhere in the West. And occasionally we have seen one or two Antunas listed in telephone directories, but it's not a common name. The common name in the Hispanic community is Antunez, A-N-T-U-N-E-Z, and my father always said that one of my grandfathers had changed the E-Z to an A to make it sound “more Spanish. “ I don't know if it's true or not, but this is one of the little stories we grew up with. My mother was Elvira Encarnaci#n Ruiz; and her mother had been very ill when my mother was born, and so her oldest sister, Juanita Tafoya, had raised her. So, I grew up knowing my “Nanita,” Juanita Tafoya, married to my grandfather, Silviano Tafoya. They were really not my grandparents; they were my uncle and aunt, but they're my grandparents as far as I'm concerned. My real grandparents on my mother's side were Leonides Gallegos and my grandmother was called Lilita, L-I-L-I-T-A. They're the only names that I recall. They had grown up in the area in Pecos, New Mexico, later moving to San Antonio (Upper Town) near Las Vegas.

My mother had a 7th grade education. During that time in New Mexico, most of the education was in Spanish, although she did speak English and was able to read newspapers and prayer books and magazines—that kind of reading. I never saw her reading big, thick heavy books such as I read. But there was reading in my home. As I told

you, my father needed to speak English and he read a lot. My father was always with a pocket book, yet he only had a 4th grade education in Mexico, totally Spanish.

Q: Totally in Spanish?

JARAMILLO: Totally in Spanish in Mexico; in Durango, Mexico. So, I learned—it was very interesting about education. They were both, obviously, not school-educated, yet my father was a very well educated man in that he was self-educated. He was a gifted musician. He was a talented electrician, and just a superb boot-maker, saddle-maker; really a craftsperson. But he earned his living with the shoe shop. He invented lots of different tools that he would use in his shoe shop; and would spend a lot of time writing up his inventions and trying to get patents for them. Nothing ever panned out for him, but he worked very hard at it, and it was a constant thing. So we had that as “on the studious side. “ He composed beautiful music. He taught music to lots of children; he had lots of orchestras and bands. And he would—at that time, Mexican music was difficult to get—the sheets of music—so he would write it up as he played it. He also composed lots of new ones. So, it was—

Q: A rich home.

JARAMILLO: A rich home in that sense, but economically very, very poor. We were very poor economically. My mother came from a family of five sisters, all poor because it was mostly subsistence living. Agriculture was the background that they had come from. And my father in his shoe shop, with his music and stuff, he was a brilliant man but he didn't have any business sense. So what little money he made was put right back into whatever it was that he was doing at the time. So, that was sort of that background. Regarding religious training in my home, it's very, very different from most Hispanics. My father, though he and my mother had been married in the Catholic Church, my mother claimed that he had never gone back to church again. And the way we thought about it later on as grown-ups, he had gone to the ceremony in order to “marry my mom” because he himself

claimed to be completely a non-believer in God. He was very much like I see some of the people that have studied and said, “We just evolved.” So, he was at that level that had absolutely nothing to do with any formal church and when you mentioned God he said that God had been invented to control human beings' behavior but there really wasn't a God.

On the other side, my mother was a faithful, faithful, devout Catholic, but with no training in religion so that it was faith alone. “My parents always went to church, so I go to church. They had the faith, so I have the faith. “ And that was what she passed on to us. I never saw a Bible ever, and the religious training that we had was “hiding from our dad,” we studied our catechism. And as a consequence, we did not get serious religious training in any sense of the word, but we did pick up the faith from our mother. And though today I go to church, it's strictly still based on faith. I have not studied religion. As many things as I have studied, religion has not interested me to study. And I don't know if it's that background that there's a little something that dad says—”They made it up to control you, my little one,” or if there was such satisfaction with my mother's faith, and it was strictly that faith alone, that I have not felt the need for studying it.

Oh, one more thing about the religious training; because we did not get to go to the religious training such as others did, either the formal catechism classes or the catechism classes after mass or attending the Catholic school, we were not in with the groups when they made their first Holy Communion, and so the three of us—my brother and my sister—each one of us made our first Holy Communion independently. We didn't go with the group. Whenever we had learned our catechism, we alone would make our first Holy Communion. And that was very different from anybody else. So, I don't know; that made me a little—that made us a little bit different from the rest of the people that we lived with that had the formal religion.

Q: Did you have the usual sort of celebrations for your first communion and a pretty white dress?

JARAMILLO: Well, yes. My mother found a way to borrow some little girl's white dress and veil, and iron it and starch it, and do all that good stuff; stick some little fresh flowers on the veil or whatever, but nothing that cost money; absolutely no festivities other than lots of hugs and kisses. That went on in our house a lot, especially with my mom. I don't recall at all my father saying anything. I don't recall if my father knew, because most of our religion was “hidden”. Although my mother and I went to mass every morning. We'd leave the house at 5:30, go to 6 o'clock mass and walk back. And it was all walking; we had no car—access to a car. I was the one that became “religious” in the family group.

My sister is seven years older and my brother was two years younger, and for them, religion—”only because Mom said we have to go. “ But for me, it was really important; I liked it a lot. I remember, maybe about when I was 11 or 12 years old, thinking that I would love to be a nun; I would see the nuns in their habits, and I thought they lived such super lives; I really was enamored with that. Of course, as I grew up it sort of disappeared but I know that at one time I thought, “Oh, how wonderful!” I don't know if there was a little question there that maybe I should study. Maybe since a child I was studying so many things and that I didn't study that, and I don't know why.

I have a brother and a sister, like I said, She's seven year's older—my sister is Elvira. And my brother is Maurillo, M-A-U-R-I-L-L-O; we called him Bud because our Anglo-English-speaking teachers couldn't pronounce our names and our names got changed; so Maurillo became Bud. We now have an excellent relationship even though there was such a difference in the age that my sister was already in junior high school when I entered first grade, I don't remember a close relationship then. I hardly remember her except for certain things that happened, because she was probably into dating and I was probably—I don't know, maybe I was—pestering, I suppose. But we weren't in the same age group. But I recall my sister and I becoming very close friends as adults, like when I was in high school. By then she was working and she was helping support us, and bringing in some money for us to have at home. We became very close then, and since then, my sister and I are

very close friends. But I have a relationship with her since I'm about in high school. I don't remember that before—that close relationship.

My brother and I were very, very close. We covered for each other a lot. My father was very autocratic, very old-fashioned, and “we weren't supposed to go out at all. “ All we were supposed to do was go to school, go to work—because we worked in the shoe shop—and go home. And that was the whole syndrome. My mother felt sorry for us because she knew the need for play, so she would cover for us so that we would be able to play and visit with friends. She would cover and maybe she'd walk with us. What I remember the most is when my brother and I were in high school together and he [Father] didn't want us to go to school dances, and back then, that was the thing; that was when kids did dance. We'd all come out and my mother would say that we were going to visit someone, and then she'd visit with a neighbor and my brother and I would run off to the dance and we'd dance maybe an hour or so, and then we'd run back—cut across a river in order not to take such a long time, and we'd walk in. We covered like this, so we became very good friends. Bud and I loved to dance and I remember at the school dances he would watch, and if I wasn't asked to dance he would ask me to dance; so I was always the really popular girl at the dance. So it was neat to have that brother.

Let me see what else we did. My grandmother and grandfather had a little ranch about 20 miles north of Las Vegas.

Q: Now this is really your aunt and uncle?

JARAMILLO: Yes, but they are grandparents for us. We used to go a lot to the ranch, so Bud and I had a special relationship there, too. We did a lot of things that we were told we couldn't do. For example, “We were from the city and didn't know how to ride horses. “ And so we always went with the kids that lived in that area and we got on horses when our parents didn't see us, and all this kind of stuff. So we covered for each other; we became good friends in sort of a funny way. I'd help him if he needed to get away with his friends

and we didn't have the permission to do it. We also learned to help each other with—we didn't have money, but I was a very hard worker and if I got a nickel, I'd keep it. And if Bud got a nickel, he'd spend it. Then when Bud needed money, I would always come up with my nickel or dime, or whatever I had saved. So, we had a very good relationship. The three of us are very close as grown-ups, very, very close. We love each other.

Q: When you were very small, did you play with your little brother?

JARAMILLO: Oh, yes.

Q: Did you feel maternal toward him?

JARAMILLO: Oh, yes; oh yes. And he was real cute. My sister and I were not beautiful people; we were just homely little girls, and my brother was so cute, so we just loved him. [Laughs] I would have wanted him to be a girl so that I could have put bows in his hair and stuff, but back then it was not the thing to do. My mother just loved him, and we knew he was the favorite, but he was our favorite, too, so it didn't matter.

Q: That's interesting. JARAMILLO: Definitely, he was my mom's favorite. I think I was my father's favorite. I know I was my grandparents' favorite.

Q: Really?

JARAMILLO: Yes, oh yes. It was obvious, and now that I think back, I think, yes, I had a lot of that special feeling of: “You're okay; you're doing fine.”

Q: Yes, yes. It gives such a wonderful inner feeling and security.

JARAMILLO: Right. Even if you're very, very poor and you're not getting to do what the other kids are doing, there was enough of that going on in our house so that we were getting a lot of pats on the back. An interesting thing, I think, with our relations with our parents, was my father's insistence that we get excellent grades and almost a straight-A

student from what we called pre-first (today they call it kindergarten) through the Ph. D. level. We saw him reading constantly and my mother set it up at home so that we could study. We were so poor we didn't have heat, but yet she'd bundle us up so we could sit up; wrap us, do all these extra things to help us study..

Q: A nurturing home you had. What sort of games did you play when you were small? And what sort of books did you read? I suppose you learned to read well before you went to school?

JARAMILLO: No, no, no. We didn't read before we sent to school, no. We learned to read at school. And we learned English at school. We spoke no English whatsoever. I learned to read a little Spanish in my grandmother's prayer book, she taught me to read Spanish, but that's about the time when I'm trying to learn English in school and I'm working with letters, so I learned to read simultaneously English and Spanish—my grandmother teaching us in her prayer book, Spanish, and we learning to read in school. We had things like Chinese Checkers; I remember we had a board of Chinese Checkers. I don't know where we had gotten it, but I remember we'd count the marbles to put them out. We didn't play any card games whatsoever. I don't know how to play cards and I don't know why, because most of my peers do play cards, but we didn't. I don't know if that goes back to the autocratic father and he saying that that wasn't something good to do. I don't know. I know that I played a great deal with dolls.

Q: Paper doll?

JARAMILLO: Some paper dolls, uh-huh. I remember my mom used to cut those little dolls that hold hands. We'd do those things and color them. We didn't have all that access to Crayolas, and I don't remember if others would give us broken Crayolas, or what, but I remember we'd do a lot of that. I remember the pulling of the red wagon. I don't remember if we had it or if it belonged to the neighborhood; but I remember pulling my brother in that little wagon a lot. Outside things—we played a lot of what they played in the rural areas,

like stick horse, and just running around like crazy; a lot of climbing of trees—that kind of activity. I remember a lot of having rag balls. My mother would make rag balls that we'd hit around with a stick. I do remember that. Oh, I know what else was fun: we had—we'd put cans, say, a can of Pet Milk, with strings around our feet, and we would walk around on those; I remember doing that. It was just so much fun to—

Q: Sort of like stilts.

JARAMILLO: Right. To see if we could run in them and to see if we could put two of them and be a little higher. Then later on, I remember making home-made stilts—just a stick and a little kind of a wedge where our foot would go. I remember playing that. Then we played a lot of what we called adivinanzas riddles; we'd sit around, and grandfather would tell stories and riddles. And we got to be real good at them because it was the same ones over and over and sometimes we'd yell out the word before he had finished saying them. That was a pastime that we had at night; a lot of oral kinds of things, of grandfather talking about when the first Anglos had gotten into the area, when they had the trips that they used to take to bring salt from St. Louis, Missouri, and they'd go in the carts with—Gad, what were those work animals?

Q: Mules?

JARAMILLO: Mules and oxen. He'd tell stories. And I remember my grandmother would tell us stories about—there was a gang of outlaws in Las Vegas and grandmother would tell us a lot of those stories about what had happened and there was a famous place near the bridge where an outlaw had been hung. They would talk about when that was a very important town because it was on the way to Ft. Union. So we got a lot of oral history that, at the time, was not taught in the schools. We were fortunate that we picked up a lot of the local history through the oral exchanges that were happening at night, because we didn't have all the extra things to be doing—to be playing other games. So we did a lot of that.

My relations with my grandparents were just great; I just loved them and they loved me. We were, as I told you, extremely, extremely poor, but whenever my grandpa had a job we always had a treat. He was very, very special. Aunts—I had four aunts on my mother's side and they all had large families and they were all very good to us. They were all a little bit better off financially; by that, I don't mean they were rich. I mean that maybe the father had a steady job, so they had a steady income. On my father's side, I have one aunt who my father brought here after he and my mother had married. They brought her and she was here and she is the only living aunt I have today. But of all of them, she was my favorite.

Q: Uh-huh. Perhaps she's more like you? You say you're your father's favorite and have this application and love of books.

JARAMILLO: Could be; could be. She's up in years now, tiny and very heavy. That was the other thing that was funny about me. I'm one of the tallest Hispanic women from that generation. Today I'm not because we have so many Hispanic girls that grow tall; but back then, I was the tall one. I'm 5'6" and most of them were like little darlings of 5'2". [Laughs] And they were well-padded and I was skinny, skinny, skinny. So I was very different.

Relationships with my uncles were great, too. I just had an extended family where everybody liked everybody else; and lots of love from adults for children. And though maybe my particular family didn't have the money--[break in tape transmission]

Talking about my relationship with my uncles: again, like I say, it was a real good relationship with adults and children. The other uncles and aunts were a little bit better off and we never felt that we didn't participate because I remember, specifically, that if an uncle gave each one of the kids a nickel, we got a nickel, too, as though it had been coming from my father or my mother. It was never made a to-do. We were always made to feel we were part of them. And all the uncles were like that. They all loved us; a very, very close-knit family. And it's just in the last few years that I've lost all of my uncles and all

of my aunts. I really was very fortunate in that. Other than my grandfather that I lost when I was 12, I lost my grandmother when I was serving as ambassador. She was 96 years old. My aunts have just passed away in the last 10 to 15 years. So I was very fortunate in growing up with a very large extended family with lots of uncles and aunts and cousins.

The other thing is that in the Hispanic culture, people that are good to you and live in the area become a part of your family, too. So then you have the whole barrio; it becomes kind of a extended family and you can go in and out of homes just as if you're going in and out of your own. So it's just a beautiful feeling, just a beautiful feeling. That feeling not too many Hispanics are nurturing now because of the high mobility within the Hispanic communities. That meant you had roots; you had to stay there and you knew everybody. I know that I don't remember ever, ever checking to see if the door was locked, ever in that community. I'm sure that has changed by now but, at that particular time, everybody knew everybody else. It was also a wonderful thing, because of this relationship—it might be, I don't know, that we might have wanted to misbehave. But wherever you were, people knew you, so you didn't misbehave. No anonymity. [Laughter]

Q: Yes, society, has very strong sanctions. You say your father's sister is still alive?

JARAMILLO: Yes, she is. She's the only aunt that I have. And just great. Now my uncle, her husband, just died a couple of years ago. She's the last one left. She lives up at Las Vegas. I make an effort to see her, to write to her. She has a daughter that lives here in Albuquerque, so she comes—oh, two or three times during the year, so I get to see her.

Q: Well, this was Las Vegas, where you grew up?

JARAMILLO: Yes, yes.

Q: Was the community entirely Hispanic?

JARAMILLO: No. It was about, oh, I would say probably—I'm just going to make a guess—I'd say maybe two-thirds Hispanic and a third something that we called Anglo. But that included the—it's really funny. Today they're Lebanese, but at that time we called them Arabs in Las Vegas. They were all the merchants; they were Lebanese and Palestinians. And the Jewish community, who were the ones that were in control of the business part of it.

Q: They weren't considered Anglo, were they?

JARAMILLO: At that time, they were. We put them in; anybody that's non-Hispanic. We had no blacks. I saw my first black person when I was 14 years old. There were no blacks. You see, it was a subsistence economy, so nobody came in to try to work. And so the ones that you had there were the Jewish and the Lebanese community, being the merchants and the business people, and then the rest of what we identified as Anglos, who would work for them and with them in the stores and in the businesses. Then the large Hispanic community, who lived off subsistence agriculture or the government, because we had a large insane asylum in the community, so a lot of our people worked there; and also in government. They became good politicians, going after positions in the government. It was hard growing up at that particular time because there just weren't jobs.

You know, they say life wasn't expensive then. True. But to get that nickel to go buy a nickel's worth of sugar was very difficult.

Q: Yes, and you already commented that you had no heat, and I'm sure it got cold in the winter.

JARAMILLO: Oh, very cold. One thing that we would do in the evening, my mother would say, “We are going to go for a walk,” and so, we'd go for a walk. But what we were really doing is, in the daytime we had seen where there were sticks or pieces of wood, and in the evening we would “go for a walk,” and we'd play around and kick the stick and the stick got

home, and that was something that we used for our stove. I look back at that now, and I think: why didn't we just pick it up in the daytime when we had seen it? You know, there was a sense of pride,—that you didn't let people know that you really needed to pick up sticks from the street in order to keep warm. There was that sense that you didn't ask for help. The help came from your friends, from your family; but in ways that never made you feel ashamed. For example, I know that I always wore dresses that my mother would take apart from women's dresses; wash them, iron them, and then make me my clothes. And she was told, “We're giving you these clothes because you're so handy and so good with that needle, and you are so clever in making things.” She wasn't told: “. . . because your kids don't have any clothes,” see. So you learned to do things in ways that don't offend.

Okay; why don't we move on and talk about illnesses? This is real interesting. Today on campus, there is a measle outbreak, and I have talked to the doctor and said that maybe I should get my measle immunization because I don't remember being sick as a child, at all. We were just really fortunate. We remember other kids being really sick and we were hardly ever sick, and I don't know why. I've thought a lot about it through the years, and I can't figure it out.

The only serious illness that I remember having is, that I was exposed at some time to what they thought was poison ivy, a very serious case of poison ivy. I was blistered all over; it was just awful. I must have been, oh, maybe six or seven years old, and it was during the summer. Well, then, every summer for seven years, I blistered up again, and I would have these horrible blisters all over my body, especially on my hands, and I couldn't touch my fingers together. It was just awful. Sometimes they would put a couple of chairs and put a sheet over them and I would be completely nude under the sheet. Of course, during that time, all they would do for you is put baking soda on you or corn starch and not take you to the doctor because they couldn't afford to.

I had had this for about three or four summers already where, about a month of my summer, I was just miserable, and a doctor moved in next door. A young doctor moved

in next door into the barrio. My mother told him about me and he said that it was poison ivy. That's what the family had always been saying—that it was poison ivy. I remember he gave us some kind of medication. I remember very vividly that my mother washed and ironed their clothes for a month or so, to pay for that medication. And the following year, I had it again—”poison ivy.”

The seventh year of me having these horrible outbreaks, they took me to another doctor. Evidently, my grandfather was working then, and whenever my grandfather was working, we'd get these extras. I remember that they took me to a doctor; his name was Dr. Howe. I'll never forget, H-0-W-E, and Dr. Howe said, “That's not poison ivy; that's poison oak.” Now, as a grownup, with all this wonderful hindsight that I have, every summer we went to the ranch and I roamed the hills and so every summer I would pick up the poison oak. Because I had been told to stay away from the poison ivy, I would run through the oak! [Hearty laughter] It wasn't an illness that kept coming back; I think I was reinfecting myself. Because when he said it was oak and they gave us pictures of what it looked like, and then I stayed away from it, I never got it again. The allergy must have been just terrible.

Q: It must have been dreadful. Oh, how you must have suffered.

JARAMILLO: But that's the only illness that I recall. I know that at the end of the year we always got the perfect attendance awards, so that means that we were not sick. And I don't know if that's psychological, that since my father had said we were going to get A's and if you didn't go to school you didn't get straight A's. I don't know how it works, but I don't remember being sick.

Q: Is this true of your brother and sister, too?

JARAMILLO: Yes.

Q: Didn't they have polio epidemics in those days where you were?

JARAMILLO: I don't remember when we got our vaccinations for polio. And I don't remember any kids at school having it. Maybe we were so protected, living in a rather isolated community at the time. There might have been some. An incident that I remember is that one time they put up a high fence—what do you call these fences, not like chicken wire, but there are little squares and it's a thick wire? They put up one of those around our school yard, and we used to live near the school, so we would play on the playground every evening. Well, now they put up this fence and we couldn't get to the swings. So we were playing around, and we wanted to get to the swings. They had put it on our side of the street, and if you went around a couple of blocks, you were able to walk in through a gate. They were trying to control access. We didn't want to go all the way around. The boys climbed over the fence; they just put their feet in the holes and jumped over. And so here comes Mari-Luci, too. I wonder if that's when I started that “Anything you can do, I can do, too.” But I remember going up and I had on a dress; I didn't have on slacks. And when I got over the top, I lost my footing, and the top wire made a horrible gash on my thigh, and I was way up high as I fell down; and this horrible gash. I don't remember the particulars of who was with me. My brother must have been in there, but it was a group that we were always playing around with in the evening. I went home and I remember my mother, first of all, being very worried that my father was going to find out that we hadn't been in the house. And, secondly, there was no way of taking me to the doctor, so what were we going to do? I remember vividly her washing the gash over and over until she got it to stop to bleed. So I had this big, big scar on my leg.

Q: It should have been sewn, I suppose.

JARAMILLO: It should have been sewn, I think. I remember many, many weeks, going to school, and that they would save—Oh, back then, things used to come wrapped in cellophane paper, as opposed to plastic, and my mom would save that cellophane and she would put that piece of cellophane under the cloth that she would put over it, so it wouldn't get stuck. So you know that was an open wound. And I kept that scar forever. When I grew

up, like when I was in high school and we'd wear shorts in P. E. , everybody would always ask me about that scar. I don't know if you know this, but scars go away. Now in my old age, you can hardly see it.

Q: Really, really? [Both laugh] How old were you when this happened, Mari- Luci?

JARAMILLO: I was in grade school, so it has to be before 6th grade. I don't think I would have been doing it when I was about 11 or 12, so I must have been about 7, 8 or 9, something like that. But that was a very hard thing. Related to illness, which I think is something that just shows the degree of—it's really related to health—my mom kept us squeaky clean. That was her thing; okay, squeaky clean. And, of course, she couldn't buy fancy soaps, so we got washed with that horrible yellow soap they used to have; those bars of soap that they used to wash the clothes with. Well, we didn't have access to shampoo and fancy soaps, so we got washed with some of that soap. And every night we got washed—ears, neck, etc. We really got washed. We didn't have an inside bathroom and so we'd take our baths in our tub in the kitchen. We'd get scrubbed so much. I remember on top on my knees, during the winter, I can't tell you how many winters, but I know it was more than one, I'd have these horrible rough spots on top of my knees where my skin was so rough that it would actually bleed; because I had gotten scrubbed a lot in the evening but no lotion, and then in the morning it would be very cold. Evidently I was sensitive to the cold. I am now as a grown up. You can have all the snow you see on that beautiful mountain, I'm not going to go out there. I hate the cold now. But that parallels—we were so clean but we didn't have the lotion that goes with some of that cleanliness. You need some extra things. That I remember. It's not an illness, but I remember watching that I couldn't cross my legs because it hurt so much, you know, and always having this red, red spot. I remember my mom telling a lady once—a neighbor or a relative—about how I would scrub and scrub and scrub until I'd make that bleed. I stop and think back now, and I wonder which one was the bigger scrubber. [Laughs] Now I'll admit that I picked it up, too.

But other than that, I just don't remember serious illnesses. Like I say, we were never absent from school, so evidently we didn't get a whole lot of colds, or if we did, the desire for succeeding in school was so great that if we had colds, we must have exposed everybody else [laughing] because I don't remember being absent.

We had no deaths in the family whatsoever until I was 12 years old. And that's when my grandfather died. My grandfather had been plowing with his horses out in the field, and at noon he was coming to the house to have lunch and he fell dead. At the time, people would say it was a sunstroke because he'd been out working in the sun, you understand. But I'm sure that it was a heart attack. He died and we missed him a great deal because he had been so good to us. He had been kind of the one that kept our little family together, because my father was not a good provider and my grandfather, if he was working, was the one that gave us the money.

Q: It must have been very traumatic.

JARAMILLO: Oh, yes. It was real awful, just awful, that grandfather was gone. Of course our little grandmother was all alone. Notice that I say “little.” She was 4'11”.

Q: Was she really?

JARAMILLO: Yes, and, see, I'm close to 5'7”, so you wonder how that happened.

Okay. The item on your list of topics, Expectations of parents: My parents thought that if we got an education we'd get out of poverty. They lived it, both through my father's example of always reading and studying and learning more; and my mother providing the environment that even though we were poor, we had to study. We came home and had to study. We had to do our homework. We couldn't do anything until the homework was done. To this day I hate to cook. I am one of the few Hispanics from a poverty base that doesn't know how to cook, because my mother insisted that we study and she do the work. There was nothing that we did but—study, study, study, study, so all three of us learned

to read well, lucky for us, and we became readers. You finished your homework and then you read a lot. The kinds of books that we read were the ones that teachers suggested —the Nancy Drew series, you know, the whole bit. Little Women, Here We Go Up. All those things, just one after the other. I always got all the awards for having the most book reports, because I just loved to read. I'm sure that was one of my successes.

In fact, I'll tell you a story: I've always felt that one of my successes in being an ambassador was that I read everything; and that quickly, I am sure, the word got out in the embassy: this woman reads. Because everything that was given to me, the next morning would be there, and good old schoolteacher, with circles and questions on the margin, “I don't quite understand this,” “Could you elaborate a bit more here?” A person told me that that was one of the things that had most impressed them; that normally, they turn in material to an ambassador, and an ambassador signs off on the top sheet and it's done. This one did not put her name to anything unless she read it closely. Because I'm a speed reader and I was learning, so I was reading everything and trying to learn. That was the vehicle I used for learning. I've always said that having learned to read in the first grade helped me as an ambassador. I love to read and I love to question.

Q: You talk about the little games your mother used to play, about keeping Daddy not realizing what was going on, but I sense that they were close, they had the same desires and ambitions.

JARAMILLO: They had the same desires for their children but they did not have the same lifestyles. My father always had a—friend, shall we say?—on the side.

Q: So there was friction in the home then?

JARAMILLO: There wasn't, because my mother did not say “Boo.” The modeling that I got from a woman was that a woman knows her place. She never said anything. She was a martyr. Her whole world was: “Helping my kids get out of poverty by having them study.” That was her thing. I said a while ago, he wasn't a very good provider and that is because

the extra money went off for a good time. We didn't know that as children—we didn't learn about that until we were in high school, and by then we were a part of the lifestyle. Let's say, by the time I'm a freshman at the university, I highly encouraged my mom to just drop it. He hardly was ever coming home anymore. So there was a separation but not a divorce. It was a separation, but I was already grown up and ready to leave the nest, and my brother and my sister and I have always supported my mother.

Q: How did you feel about your father? You say you believed you were your father's favorite. Did you think he was pretty special?

JARAMILLO: Oh, yes. I thought he was very special. Now, in hindsight (like I say, to be in your fifties, you're really smart), I look back and I think that was why my father didn't want us to go out. That was why my father insisted that we stay home. But, see, we didn't know that, and we just thought, “Oh, it's just 'cause so he's autocratic and because he's old-fashioned and because he's from Mexico,” and we made all these rationalizations. But the bottom line, I think, it was that.

A lot of people have asked how come I became such a strong woman in pursuing in what I wanted to pursue and doing what I wanted to do, and very obviously have been very successful in my profession, having had the model of a mother who took all this? I think that maybe that made me strong, because I decided then that I wouldn't put up with something like that, but I learned all the skills of how you continue doing something without upsetting someone else, which comes to play beautifully in office politics. They're skills that you still get away with what you want to do and you've offended no one. So I picked up some skills [in situations where] somebody else could have become bitter and said, “Well, I'm not going to be like her,” and become a confrontational type. I am like [my mother] in the sense that I don't upset the apple cart, but I get where I'm going.

Q: Maybe in a way she was a reverse model, in that you were certain you weren't going to be ending up in her situation.

JARAMILLO: Oh, that's right; that's right. And maybe that, too, helped me with the desire to succeed in school because what they kept telling us, both my father and my mother, was that we would get out of poverty if we had an education. Now what that meant, I don't think they knew; I don't think in their mind it meant “Get a Ph.D.” I don't even know if it meant “Graduate from high school.” At the time, the majority of Hispanics in that community were probably not graduating from junior high. So I don't know what was in their head, but we couldn't come home if we didn't have straight A's. So you worked very, very hard at school and there, too, you learned skills and behaviors for survival that wont quit in the workplace.

Q: Just one question. Going back as you see yourself as a little girl, playing with your brother and the other neighborhood children, how would you classify yourself? Were you a very feminine little girl, or were you a tomboy?

JARAMILLO: I would say, if you had to choose feminine or boyish, I'd say feminine. Feminine, but doing things like climbing trees, climbing fences, playing ball.

Q: You liked physical activity?

JARAMILLO: Yes, physical activity. I played a lot with dolls, too, so it was well-rounded; it wasn't one-sided. But I'm sure that if I had been called a tomboy I would have been offended at that time. I'm sure that I would have because, at that time, in the Hispanic community, to have been called a tomboy was not very nice.

Q: Oh! That's interesting.

JARAMILLO: I would say that now that is not true. Today in the Hispanic community they're pushing little girls to do whatever they want to do, but back then, it was not so. I don't think it was so in the Anglo community either, but that I can't speak about. I know I would have said that I was leaning toward doing the feminine kinds of things that little girls

did. I'm sure that if I had been upsetting my teachers in any way I wouldn't have been the straight-A kid.

Q: Well, no, but you did say you liked climbing trees, and you liked riding horses, and I just thought—

JARAMILLO: The riding horses was more, I think, to help my brother out, because he needed to do all those things. I was scared silly. I did get on horses, but I was scared silly. But I did get on them because they would say, “These city kids don't know anything.” So I'd get on them and prove to them. I've always done that.

Q: Have you?

JARAMILLO: Yes. But I don't like animals, period. I would not get close to a horse today if they paid me all the money in the world. I'm deathly afraid of animals. I don't like animals.

Q: They have so many teeth.

JARAMILLO: [Laughter] I always say I'm a very poor American. I don't have pets and I don't like sports and spectator sports, I don't like it. [Laughs]

Okay. I shared with you Expectations [of my parents]. [Now let's go to] my own Early ambitions. Early ambitions were, I want to do well in school, and I want to get a job, and I want to make money, and I want to be able to eat whatever I want. That was my big thing. When I grew and up and earned money, I was going to have money to buy bananas. Oh, that's what I really wanted.

Q: Isn't it interesting when one looks back at the things that seemed so out of reach? And now, of course, you can have all the bananas you wanted and then some.

JARAMILLO: Now I can't because now I'm watching my diet and I can't have any. [Laughter]

Okay. Now for Friendships: It seems that friendships—I always had one particular girlfriend some time in my life. I can remember my girlfriend—my best girlfriend through elementary school, my best girl friend through junior high, and maybe a couple of good friends in freshman, sophomore year, and then a very special girlfriend again, junior, senior and the beginning of my college. Up to the time I got married, I always had a particular girlfriend. We would share and laugh, and mostly make fun of everything that was happening around us. I've always been known for a sense of humor and I know that I don't know how to tell one joke. I just don't know jokes, but I have a sense of humor and I like to play with words, and I can ad lib to what's going on, and just have a lot of fun. I always had a friend like that; always had a girlfriend. Through high school, the girl friend that I had, what we would do is embroider a lot. We'd sit on Sundays and just embroider like crazy. We'd read together and talk. Talk about clothes and all the things girls talk about.

Q: What sort of things did you embroider?

JARAMILLO: Oh, heavens I've embroidered like crazy: Towels, top sheets, pillow cases, bed spreads, aprons, you name it.

Q: Oh, really?

JARAMILLO: Yes, I do solid embroidery. I always have done that. Some of the stuff that I did when I was a young child was only with one thread, because we had to conserve thread. My mother taught me how to embroider, but we wouldn't have enough of the thread, and so now I embroider with as many threads as my work will allow me. I still embroider, especially on planes.

My mother loved to garden. She always had pretty flowers in the window sills. We lived in the barrio where people normally didn't have gardens and she always had a pretty little garden, so we picked that up from her. One of my hobbies is gardening; I grow flowers.

They say our whole family has green thumbs, but I think it's the modeling from our mother. Another topic, Solitary occupations: [I've told you about] embroidery and reading. A little bit of writing.

Q: Really?

JARAMILLO: Yes. I don't have things now, but—

Q: Stories?

JARAMILLO: Yes, and I'd write—mostly related to school work. I just love—there's a fascination with school work there that I haven't been able to quite drop yet. Everything revolves around school. And then having become a teacher, and then staying with school, I always talk about going to school, not about going to work.

[Reading from a list of topics] Organizations in my early years: none. Team sports: none. Individual sports: none. Little barrio kids—whatever they played was in unorganized ways, but I didn't belong to anything in my early years. In high school, the first club I joined was the Spanish Club in high school. Most things that you could belong to took money.

Q: I see.

JARAMILLO: Okay. [Reading] Choice of schools: parental and personal attitude toward. I went to the public school. I happened to go to the public school on the Anglo side of town because we lived in an area outside, kind of an undeveloped area; and so it turned out that we went to school on the Anglo side of the community. Public school always. You already know why I couldn't go to a Catholic school. We had several schools in town, so it would be maybe an elementary school of about, oh, I don't know, eight or nine classrooms of 40 kids apiece, or something like that.

Q: Forty children per class? Whew!

JARAMILLO: Yes. I loved school; still do. I was what teachers called an excellent student. I look back and I think I was teacher's pet everywhere I went. I learned the behavior that they liked and so I was comfortable with it; so I got all the A's. I loved everything. There wasn't a subject that I didn't like. The one that made me suffer was penmanship because my teachers insisted that I hold the pen and pencil in a certain way and I couldn't. If you see my finger, I have a corn because I hold my pencil in another way. And so even though I had beautiful penmanship, they insisted I wouldn't hold my pen correctly and I was afraid they wouldn't give me an A and my dad would get mad at me.

Q: Oh, poor little girl!

JARAMILLO: So, penmanship went by the wayside as far as liking it, although if teacher wasn't watching how I was holding my pen, my paper got put up on the bulletin board. But if she was standing there and she saw how I held my pencil, there went every single grade. I enjoyed every subject up through my sophomore year. I had loved math, too. In my sophomore year, I took geometry and I didn't like geometry as much. And now I look back at it as people study about women not liking math, and I loved math and, in fact, had thought that I wanted to do something with math, and in my sophomore [year],not liking it —I realized that everything I had been doing in math I had memorized. And in geometry, it was the first time they asked me to think, and I hadn't been taught to think in math. I had been memorizing. Like your formulas in Algebra, you memorize them and then you could do them faster than everybody else if you knew how to add, multiply and divide. So they always wanted to show me off, that I was the most brilliant person they had ever seen in algebra. But then in geometry, to see the relationship of this angle to that angle, and though I got my A for it, I didn't enjoy it. I didn't know why at the time; but that was the end of my interest in math. Now it's something that I share with young women as I talk to them, to try to get kids to think about the relationships in math, because I'd probably have gone on to do something in math and science had it not been for that.

Q: Is it still true that girls aren't doing well in mathematics?

JARAMILLO: Oh yes, oh yes. It's still—we still have to give anxiety workshops for women to be able to get over it. As you can tell, most of my teachers were my favorites. I liked them all, but there was one that was really influential, and I'm going to tell you about her here even though this isn't where it belongs. Her name was Nell Dougherty, and she was my high school English teacher in my senior year. She thought that I was just going to set the world on fire. She just knew I was going to do something great; and she encouraged me right and left.

I was now in college and had one more semester to finish, and she had heard via the grapevine that I wasn't attending school. She came to visit me and she asked me why I was not going back to school.

I said, “Well, I had decided I was going to work at the parachute factory one more semester,” or something. See that I had learned that you don't talk about these things.

Miss Dougherty said, “Mari-Luci, I don't want you not to finish. You need that education. First of all, you know you're going to do something great with that education. Secondly, I know you're happily married, but some day you might need to have that degree, and you only have a semester to go. Tell you what. How much does it cost you to go to school?” See, I hadn't said I didn't have the money, but that's the reason why I wasn't going. I said, “It would cost $200.” And she said, “I'll lend you the $200.” I said, “No, Miss Dougherty. I don't have any way of paying the money back. I can't.”

She said, “Well, this is what we'll do: It will be a loan; I'm not giving the money to you, but you will repay me if you can some day, you'll give me the money back. And if you can't, some day through your education, you'll help somebody else that needs help.”

So I thought about it and I said, “Okay. I'll do that, because I don't think I can pay you in cash now. “ So she gave me the $200 and I went to school that semester and finished. By

the time I finished the semester I had a job offer, and the first paycheck that I got, I gave her her $200.

I was able to get a job, but see, I was so afraid that I wasn't going to be able to get a job. And the fear of getting in debt . . . She was a favorite, in that she always counseled me and advised me, and just kept telling me how bright I was, and what a future I had, and that was very important. I was a senior in high school. Most seniors—that was the end of their careers; they were going to go to work in the five-and-dime and these kinds of things, and she was encouraging me. So, I think I've had wonderful teachers. I could just go on all day about them, but probably she's the one that stands out as the greatest.

Q: Did you have any Hispanic teachers who were role models?

JARAMILLO: No. They didn't hire Hispanic teachers then.

Q: Oh, is that so?

JARAMILLO: Oh, yes. I've lived through ugly discrimination, and have seen a lot of that. We didn't have them. They have them now, but back then they didn't.

Now, to another topic Activities in high school and college—yes, lots of them. In college, I learned quickly that I didn't need to buy books. I'd borrow books and I'd underscore them for other people, and I'd tutor other people, and I could use their books. Since I loved to read, I could read them fast, and so I did. So that gave me an opportunity to become a popular person because students would lend me books and then I'd help tutor and belonged to lots of things. There another teacher appeared; Dr. Anne Lohrli, who also was just great. She noticed that only Anglo kids got to participate in the sororities, and she was very upset. So she started a sorority for us, complete with the rituals and the ceremonies and the constitution and the meeting dates and everything. She really made us feel very special.

You know, she did that because she loved us. You know, she didn't have to do that, and she spent her money doing it. So she got us involved in “sorority” work, and we learned to do a lot of things. She got us involved in doing things in the community and scholastically, and occasionally have a sit-down dinner, which most of us didn't have all the correct manners.

She did all these things for us; and that was at the college level. So, you can see—it's not where you are, it's where you've come from that I think is important.

[Referring to another topic], Impact of World War II for me was that there were a lot of boys in my freshman college classes. They had just come back from the war, and I was a freshman, 18 years old, in a tiny little college in Las Vegas. We had something like 700 men that had come back from World War II, with . . .

Q: Sure, the G.I. bill . . .

JARAMILLO: . . . the G.I. bill. And so it made it a fun time. Boy, I got to dance and I love to dance; I'd rather dance than eat, and that's what I got to do. Nothing else [about the war] influenced me, except when I was in the 7th grade, there was what was called a Gray Ladies' Association—it was something from the Red Cross—and they taught me to knit. I knitted lots of sweaters for the soldiers and I got a big ol' award that I had knitted the most sweaters.

Q: Well, you weren't too interested in what was going on in the war, then, because you were too young?

JARAMILLO: No, I was too young; I was too young. You know, early 6th, 7th grade, back then.

Q: Sure, sure.

JARAMILLO: Today there's more interest at the 2nd and 3rd grade level than we had back then. It was just kind of a closed world. And there was not the communication there is today.

Q: Also you weren't on either coast. I think that might have played a part.

JARAMILLO: No, and we didn't have television. We hardly ever heard the radio. A small local newspaper, as opposed to a newspaper that brought in things. So it didn't directly affect many of us.

Q: Were many boys in your community killed in the war?

JARAMILLO: Yes, from my sister's age group. From sister's age group, yes, but not from mine.

Now, another topic, Early interest in foreign affairs. It's real interesting. When people would ask me, “What are you going to do? When you grow [up]?” Listen to this: I would say, “I'm going to be a bilingual secretary in Latin America in a world court of some kind.” Number one, I couldn't type; that didn't make any difference. [Laughs] Number two, I didn't know what world court I was talking about. Number three, I had never actually seen a court reporter, and that must have been what I had had in mind. Maybe I saw one in a movie or something, because I don't know where I got it from, but I always talked about that. That was what I was going to do. I was going to live in a foreign country and I was going to be a court reporter. [Both laugh]

Q: Before we leave high school, did you ever write for your school paper?

JARAMILLO: No.

Q: How about college?

JARAMILLO: College? No. Participated a lot in radio programs; wrote radio scripts.

Q: In college?

JARAMILLO: In college, yes. For example, my favorite teacher was my English teacher. But, see, I don't think in those smaller schools that we had the school papers the way we think of them today.

Q: No, no. That's true.

JARAMILLO: I remember writing poems and teachers inviting me to their homes, too, whenever they met with their bridge clubs. I would go read my poems, or read my stories. [Laughs] What a shame that they don't keep on with that.

Q: Your extracurricular activity, then, was the Spanish group?

JARAMILLO: I joined the Spanish group one year.

Q: That was high school?

JARAMILLO: That was high school.

Q: And in college it was the sorority?

JARAMILLO: The sorority and the radio group. It was sort of the drama group. I did a lot of drama with the Spanish Club in the university. See, radio, drama, and the sorority. That's probably it.

Q: But one thing we have forgotten here is, how did you get into college?

JARAMILLO: Okay. When I graduated from high school, there were three awards given and I got the three awards.

Q: All three?

JARAMILLO: All three, yes. At that time, there were no scholarships. One of the awards was—what do you call those—Daughters of the American Revolution awards? They would give you an award. And then a fancy scholastic fraternity of some kind. The Reader's Digest gave you something—a year's subscription. And if you went to a fancy college, you would be a member of some fraternity or sorority; I've forgotten. But those were the three awards. I was valedictorian of my class—the whole bit.

When I graduated—the night that I graduated, don't ask me why, my father had never participated in these activities, he showed up at my graduation. And that night, of course, I was on center stage. In fact, to this day, I remember when they were giving the second award, I was perspiring so much I cleaned my hands on my robe and everybody laughed. There I was in the middle of the stage; kept going back for my awards. Well, we were coming out when it ended. The people were just unbelievable, you know, with my mother; “What a brilliant daughter!” and all this stuff; and all the school kids saying, “You did it. You did it!” And it was kind of my night, the graduation night. And my father was there. And he said, “You've got to go to college.” That night, when we got home, my father said that he was going to help me go to college. He said, “I will give you a hundred dollars.”

Q: Really! And was this the first you'd thought of college?

JARAMILLO: Well—

Q: Well, you'd thought of it, but was this the first time—?

JARAMILLO: I'd thought of it, but I'd thought, “There's no way we're going to make it.” I'd think, “Where am I going to get the money?” And so it really—it's like in me, because I loved school, and I kept thinking I'd love to go, and because Miss Dougherty kept saying, “You have to go.” And some of the other teachers kept telling me I had to go. They were all encouraging me, but I think I was a realist; and I kept thinking, I want to go so badly,

but I don't know how I'm going to do it. So, that summer I worked with him full time in the shoe shop, and he gave me the $100. And that's the only money I ever got from anyone; because the $200 from Miss Dougherty I paid back. I have paid for every bit of my education myself; not my husband—me.

Q: Is that right?

JARAMILLO: Yes. Every single penny. I would work at a parachute factory in Las Vegas and then they'd be in-between contracts and I'd go to school a semester. I'd work at night; I'd write other people's term papers; I'd clean houses; I'd waitress; I did everything; and I went to school. So, that $100 that my dad gave me was the only free money that I got, ever, in my education. There weren't scholarships and things like that, or grants, or loans—none of that. I already had my master's when the financial aid picture came into place, and I was one of the first ones invited to go on a pilot study to learn to teach English as a second language at the University of California in Los Angeles. So, one summer I had a fellowship, and that's it.

Q: That was at graduate level?

JARAMILLO: That was at graduate level, to start work on my Ph.D. And the rest of it is all that I earned. I didn't get any help.

Q: My word! That is quite a story.

JARAMILLO: And I think today, when people say, “I can't go to school; I can't afford it,” And I think “oh, nuts!” [Laughs]

Q: Yes, yes. Must be hard for you to be sympathetic in those cases. How large was your high school, by the way?

JARAMILLO: It's real interesting. I went to a high school—I don't even know—but it was a medium-sized school for a community of 14,000. We had two high schools—one in the

Anglo part of town and one in the Hispanic part of town; and I went to the Anglo part of town. But my junior year, we moved to another part of town, and it was too far for me to walk to that high school. It's a wonder that I didn't drop out. You know, I look back and I think, “Oh my God!” It was too far to go back to my high school. That friend that I was telling you about—that we embroidered and everything—she went to the “laboratory school” of the university, and so we talked, and we talked, and we talked that I wasn't going to be able to walk. It was going to be about a 2-hour walk, and I wasn't going to be able to make it. And so, I changed my senior year—I went to the lab school at the university. And it was the last year that the lab school was in existence.

Q: That was coed?

JARAMILLO: Yes. All my schooling was always coed.

Q: Well, that must have been very difficult—to change in your very last year.

JARAMILLO: Uh-hmm. It was really hard. And I look back at it and I think, that would have been a perfect excuse for saying, “Ahh, I'm not going to go. I'm not going to be with my friends. What about my basketball team?” and all those things that are important for teenagers. I was just very, very lucky.

Q: Did you play basketball?

JARAMILLO: No, no. But you know, when you're in high school everyone cheers whether you understand what they're playing or not. Okay. Let me move on and talk to you about my career. [Quoting] First jobs: I started cleaning people's homes when I was 11 years old.

Q: Oh, no!JARAMILLO: Then I worked in my father's shoe shop after school and Saturdays. Those were my first jobs. I did a little bit of waitressing one summer. I worked in a parachute factory. I had never sewn on a machine and it was a four needle machine, sewing parachutes. And that was scary because—

Q: Four needles? You mean they all go down at once?

JARAMILLO: Yes, yes. You have to have four rows, and the material has to be so that there's a fold of it; and it has to be straight so that when you put it up against the light there must be no rips because that would come apart. I'm a very conscientious person. That was a very hard job because I'd worry, and I'd worry, “What if it wasn't perfect?” So, those are kind of the jobs that I had.

Q: How much were you paid when you cleaned houses at the age of 11? Do you remember?

JARAMILLO: Yes. Fifty cents a week.

Q: Oh!

JARAMILLO: Yes, fifty cents a week and that included—in one house, I'd scrub the side porch and the back porch and I scrubbed the coal-bin in the basement for fifty cents a week.

Q: Why would anybody want a coal bin cleaned?

JARAMILLO: Can you imagine? Can you imagine? Because this kid really knew how to clean. We'd run out of the spaces to clean. It was unbelievable. But, anyway, I got a lot of skills. It's a special training. “Development of skills:” Well, I learned cleaning skills. Won't quit. Okay? I learned how to. [laughs] Whether it's clothes, it's a house, it's a kitchen, it's cleaning skills. To this day, my idea of heaven is have some time and then wash a window so that it is spotless.

Q: Is that right? [Laughter]

JARAMILLO: Oh, I love it. And I just—oh, my goodness—to walk into a house that's really well kept! I learned skills—behavioral skills. I became an observer. And I will observe

details that nobody else will pick up. We'll go out of some place and I'll say, “Did you see that?” And they'll say, “Where'd you find that out?” “Gad! It was so obvious to me.”

I picked up skills because I lived in a bicultural world and people refused to say that it was a bicultural world, so I learned my own observation skills. I watched how teacher behaved and I watched how the kids that she liked behaved, and then I acted like those kids, and then I was one of them. And so I learned how to do that. I learned behaviors that were different; they were rewarded behaviors in one culture and maybe weren't rewarded in another.

Q: It must have been difficult to change gears all the time.

JARAMILLO: You learned to adjust. Now you're in this setting, now you do this; now in your setting, you do that. And it becomes automatic; you don't think about it. If you're a true bicultural person; you just swing—just like you change your gears. You're now with your husband, relaxing at home—you're behaving one way. You're now with some friends, eating lunch downtown; you're behaving another way. You didn't stop and think: Well, now I'm not behaving like I was with my husband. It's automatic. Well, that's what happens to a truly bicultural person. I'm completely convinced. You just switch from one to the other, and you learn where there are rewards and where there are not.

The first time that I went to Latin America with an Anglo professor, the Anglo professor was in charge, and I was just “with” him. Not once was I identified by a Latino as a North American; not once. And I was with only one other person—an Anglo professor. Every country that we went—we went to eleven countries in Latin America, and I was just simply introduced as Mari Luci-something, and we'd start conversations and they'd ask, you know, what country I had joined Dr. Zintz because they never identified me as an American.

Q: Now, was this his fault?

JARAMILLO: No, that was that I am so bicultural that people did not identify my behavior as American.

Q: I understand; I understand.

JARAMILLO: Even though I was with an Anglo person from the University of New Mexico. In Colombia, they asked me if I was Ecuadorian; in Ecuador, they asked me if I was Colombian. They knew that there was something in my Spanish that wasn't exactly like theirs, but they never said, “You're from the States. “

Q: Isn't that interesting!

JARAMILLO: So I think that's the true test of being bicultural; that you know what is accepted in a given culture in a social class. In a social class, because it is not across the board; it's according to your social class that you're in, and knowing the social classes of the educated, you can go back and forth on that. So, I got expertise. I became completely, completely conversant in Spanish, which is not true of my generation, those in power did not want us to speak Spanish.

Q: Did you think of it as being a less-good language than English?

JARAMILLO: They did, but not me, because there was a reinforcement in my home, but I'm convinced that the people my age level who don't speak Spanish, that that's the reason. They did internalize that feeling of “It must not be quite as good. “ But I had so much reinforcement at home in the Spanish that I picked that up. So I picked up all the skills of being bicultural.

The expertise that I picked up was the content of professional education. My degree is in education. I picked up a degree in English and I picked up a degree in Spanish, so I have the languages and the education. I have a broad educational background with sociology and psychology and the broad education that I think is important.

Mentors—I told you about my special relationships with teachers in both elementary and secondary, but I don't think of having mentors or role models until I get to the university. At the university level, I have a lot of mentors, and all my mentors are men. A lot of people when I'm talking with women groups and I say this, they say, “Why is this?” And I'll say, “Please don't forget. I'm the first Hispanic woman, wherever, and what other woman is going to help me when there aren't any there that look like me and understand me?” So the ones that surround me are the few Hispanic males that have moved in, and they were the ones that helped me. And there's a large number of them.

Q: They're all Hispanic?

JARAMILLO: All Hispanic; all Hispanic men that were really mentors; that gave of their time to say, “Mari-Luci, look. This is what you have to do in order to get past that barrier. This is the kind of thing that they're going to expect of you. These are the kinds of questions that they're going to ask you. Mari-Luci, you're as smart as hell. Don't you give up. “ You know, that kind.

Q: Encouragement.

JARAMILLO: They were Hispanic males. Now there are Anglo males that have been very encouraging, especially in my career. Right now, the two people that most encourage me in the professional level are two Anglo males, who just give of their thinking, just help open doors and push Mari-Luci through; just great. But when I was in school, those mentors were Hispanic males who were already there.

Q: Yes, now you've succeeded so it's not the same.

JARAMILLO: Right. So, I myself, personally, don't have any hangups that those men are trying to keep me down because, in my case, those men were the ones that helped me go up.

Q: And yet, isn't a tenet of the Hispanic culture that women stay home?

JARAMILLO: I think that that is something from Hollywood.

Q: Is that so?

JARAMILLO: Yes. I believe that all agrarian cultures had the men working outside and the women inside, and all cultures at the poverty level have the man running the woman ragged. When you control that, when you hold that constant, I think that the concept of machismo, the concept that we have is what Hollywood portrayed. I think machismo to be very manly, or to be very womanly, to have certain tasks assigned to you—equal tasks—it's up to you to internalize it that I'm “having to do something” to look after him. Let me give you an example: In the Hispanic family, by and large, the traditional Hispanic families of the past, the man would be the one that earned the money and she stayed home. But guess who divided the money and how it was spent?

Q: Ah-ha!JARAMILLO: Who's got the power? Now, you don't run around talking about that from the rooftops. That is an accommodation pattern within our own group, we know who's in control.

Q: So they control the money the way the Japanese women do?

JARAMILLO: That's right; that's right. And our men feel very macho because they've brought the money home.

Q: Everybody's happy. [Laughter]

JARAMILLO: You bet; you get it. [Laughs] And I can't get excited about some of those things. I want to tell you when I was in Honduras, somebody said, “How did you ever put up with those macho men?” And I said, “They're not afraid of professional women. You keep forgetting that I was working at that level.”

Now if I had been working with the very poor, that the man beats his wife twice a day and three times on Sunday, that's different. We're talking about educated people. And furthermore, it was easier than being a woman on campus, because being a woman on campus, you have to yell to be heard. In Latin America, if a woman is allowed to speak first, and she doesn't say what she's supposed to, she's the fool; she's the one that didn't take advantage. There's an opportunity that won't quit for a professional woman to be successful in Latin America.

Q: Is that so?

JARAMILLO: But it's the way you look at it and what you do with it; that's the important part, I think. And that's what I took advantage of.

Q: She's supposed to speak first?

JARAMILLO: They always stand back and let her, so if you don't say it, it's your fault, not because you were standing with a macho male.

Q: Isn't that interesting!

JARAMILLO: I still think that perception is almost more important than reality.

Q: Oh, I do too; I do too.

JARAMILLO: It's what people think, that you can move the world ahead. Let me talk a little bit more in my career about promotions. Promotions have been very interesting. They always automatically came. Women want to know how I have planned my career. And I have said, “My career has planned me.” My career takes me. I have never stopped and said, “I want to do this; I want to do that; I want to do that.” All I've ever said is, “I want to be the best first-grade teacher Las Vegas ever saw.”

I prepared to be a first grade school teacher, and that was my dream—be the best first grade teacher Las Vegas ever saw, so that every little kid that came out of my room would speak English well and would read and would be well-adjusted. Those were my dreams, and from then on, I've never thought of anything else. My career has taken me. I was in the first grade; the Superintendent came and said, “I hear wonders of what you're doing. I want you to do remedial reading.” I went off and did remedial reading. He said, “You're doing great in remedial reading.” They pulled me out and I became the language consultant for the entire system.

By then, my husband at that time was moving—was going to study in Albuquerque, so I was going to go to California because I had gotten that fellowship. Got the fellowship, came back to Albuquerque, started at first grade again (where I had started in the other place), taught there three months, and they came for me from the University of New Mexico to go work there because they had heard about me and had come to see me work. I'm a ham in the classroom. I'm a master teacher. . . I love to teach.

Q: I can believe that. How many years did it take before— well, I've got your record right here.

JARAMILLO: Yes, and I'll give you my vitae.

Q: Oh, it isn't very long.

JARAMILLO: No. It just keeps going and going and going. For example, the third year that I was a teacher, I was elected President of the Teachers' Association. The promotions come, automatic; I just do my best in my job and I don't toot my horn, and somebody's over there tooting it for me. That's the way it works. I think it's a combination of hard work and lots of good luck.

You're at the right place at the right time. I went with the first pilot project with English as A Second Language; so I'm one of the first that became specialized in the United States.

That's when the whole English movement came. Then that one was starting to fizzle a little bit when bilingual education came in. I was bilingual myself, so there I was with this background. There I was, off again—people wanting me to speak all over the nation, keynoting conferences, the whole bit. The promotions just come.

I was brought from the first-grade classroom into the university. I didn't have the credentials; I only had a Master's degree, so I was put on a project, and I was working with Latin Americans and I was supposed to be sort of the advisor. Well, pretty soon, because of my language expertise and because I had been doing this at Highlands University in Las Vegas, I was teaching methods courses because they didn't have to get somebody to translate; so off I was. And pretty soon, I'm going back and forth to Latin America; back and forth, and back and forth to every country. And the promotions automatically come.

I came in; started working. While I was working and taking classes, teaching; before you knew it, I had finished all my course work for my Ph. D. Then I had to go on half-time while I wrote my dissertation. I became an Assistant Professor, an Associate Professor, a full Professor, Chairperson of the Department, Associate Dean, Special Assistant to the President, and I've never asked for a job.

Q: Amazing! You never had to ask for a job.

JARAMILLO: The first job that I asked for was when I graduated from the university, that I wanted to be a first grade teacher. All the rest have just come automatically. From this place, they say, “Mari-Luci, we need you to help us here,” and I'll say, “I don't think I can. I've never done that.” And they'll say, “Yes, you can.” And I'll say, “I don't think so.” “Come try it.” And I go.

I just shared with you that I keep getting job promotions without ever asking for them, and it's all within education, with the exception of my ambassador's tenure, all the rest have been within education.

[Reading] Sex discrimination, I want to make real clear that I, myself, do not feel that I have been discriminated against. I think that I have seen more ugly discrimination because of ethnicity that then the sex part of the discrimination I'm not quite as aware of. Because I have seen my group discriminated against in such hideous ways that then I think we're discriminated against as a total group; that I really have not focused on what they're doing to women, because they're doing it so badly to my ethnic group. But I, myself, don't feel that I have been openly discriminated against, either because of my ethnicity or my sex. As I was sharing with you, I've just been darn lucky. But I have seen it with a lot of people, and I know it goes on continuously, and I continuously work, and write, and speak against it. I see it often with others and I think: How is it that I'm escaping it? But, rest assured, that if it ever happens to me, the world will know about it.

Q: Good!

JARAMILLO: Let me share one thing: I'm doing a lot of work with something that I guess is called “mentoring” with Hispanic women, with Hispanic professionals.

Q: Are you?

JARAMILLO: And I've just gotten the Anne Roe award from Harvard for my work with helping women professionals. Just this year, Harvard honored me with that for my work. So even though I haven't felt sex discrimination I'm working very hard because I know it happens, and I am working with Hispanic women. I'm a world traveler. I have been just about every place in the world. Having come from an impoverished background, and never having been out of Las Vegas until I was about 18 years old, it is unbelievable how I've been able to go all over the world. Part of it has been with my work. I'm invited a lot to lecture in different places. Part of it has been with my work at the university, where I have worked with a lot of projects that take me a lot of places. And the other is that my husband and I decided that we wouldn't care about all the fancy clothes in the world; that we would spend our money traveling, and that we have.

Q: Oh, how nice!

JARAMILLO: I've been to Europe five or six times. I've spent a summer in Spain. I've done all the tourist bit. I went to Germany three times in the space of 15 months. We've taken a cruise in the Mediterranean; I've been all over Northern Africa. I have only a couple of countries left from Latin America, to have been to every country at least twice. I have been to every state of the Union. So, I am very well traveled. Q: Indeed, you are.

JARAMILLO: I am what they call the Mexican migrant. [Hearty laughter] I lecture a great deal. I am now an administrator at the University of New Mexico, so I'm not lecturing on campus per se, but I am in constant demand for lecturing and keynoting all over the world. The reason that I went to Germany was that I worked with the American military in Germany and I was invited to lecture to the highest officials in the U. S. armed forces in Garmisch, Germany.

I was working with these high level people about discrimination in the armed services. So you can see that I've tried to work wherever, in trying to get at these things that I'm particularly interested in.

Q: And mostly it's discrimination that you're lecturing on?

JARAMILLO: Yes. I lecture a lot about cultural awareness. I talk a lot about the wonderful world of the bicultural person. I talk a lot about how Americans must pick up more than English.

I constantly talk about how small the world is and how Americans are getting left out because they are so “interested in their navels.” That's the only way I can say it. It's the world out there. Everybody is learning how to live in a smaller world, except us. I don't know what it's going to take. We're being left out in trade; we're being left out in places only because we're so darn arrogant and so myopic. We've just got to learn about other people. So I work a lot on that. I'm participating with a Chamber of Commerce here locally

with some groups from Mexico, in trying to get something going to show them that we do have the interest of bilingual/bicultural people, and see if we can move on that.

[Reading] Women's issues: Like I say, I'm not actively involved, but I do a lot of reading on it; I'm well versed on what's happening on women. Just about everything that comes out I read. I discuss it informally with women wherever we meet. I have participated in some women's activities—some workshops, some conferences. I am a member of the Mexican American Women's National Association and a member of the Network of Hispanic Women. I have been participating on women's issues.

Politics: It's something very interesting. I often think that I'm a born politician, whatever that means. [Laughter] But I feel so comfortable with those skills that we've identified as political skills, that more and more I'm convincing myself they are personal skills. But I've never been active in politics per se. My grandfather was in politics, and he was a Democrat; and he used to run for county office occasionally. My father, after becoming an American citizen, became a Republican. As you already know, I loved both my grandfather and my father. But, evidently, in choice of politics I sided a little more with my grandfather, or my grandfather was a better politician, because he convinced me as a child that the Democrats had the interests of the poor in mind. And, as you know, I've dedicated my life for helping the poor.

Q: Yes.

JARAMILLO: And so I became a “Democrat.” That meant that I went to vote, and I've never voted a straight-party ticket; so I don't know if that makes me a good Democrat. During the Nixon fiasco in the White House, I stopped voting because I had decided that if you couldn't trust the guys in Washington, whom could you trust? So I had kind of gotten kind of bitter and didn't vote for a little while.

And then, when Jimmy Carter came on, I got very excited that here was a man that was talking about the problems of the poor. And so I became very excited that he was talking

about human rights which, again, is my life. I got very excited, and told no one because I don't politic. But I was very excited. I was hoping that a lot of people would vote for him; didn't think that he would win, but I thought that he would make a good showing. To this day, President Carter does not know if I voted for him or not. In fact, no one knows if I voted for him or not. But I was listed as a Democrat. Oh, and by the way, I'm his biggest fan. [Laughter] But my participation in politics per se has been limited to voting. Last year, for the first time, I joined the State of New Mexico Democratic Women's Association. And that's the first time. I'm 58 years old, and it is the first time I have joined anything that is "political."

I joined because I've been promising myself since I came as an ambassador that I was going to get involved in grassroots politics. I've always been so active in other things I've never had time, and I feel very bad about that because I think all of us should be involved if we're going to have our government really be effective. Politics per se I haven't participated. I was a member of NALEOLO. That's an association of people that are interested in Hispanics being in elected or appointed offices. But I haven't been active in it, I just belonged to it.

I have all kinds of professional networks and organizations. I think instead of talking, when I give you a full vitae, you will see that I must be active in maybe 20 or so organizations right now, that I serve on about ten national boards; very, very active.

International organizations: I work very hard with Futures for Children. We have, in the University of New Mexico, lots of work in Latin America, and I work a lot with them; several organizations in Venezuela. A couple of years ago I was invited to go with OAS as an observer to the meeting in Buenos Aires in Argentina. So my network out there are very, very good.

My networks with the military worldwide are excellent. I get loft of calls to speak with military groups especially those that have interests in the ethnic part. So those are some of

the stationary places where they work with the people that are going to be officers. I'm very heavily involved in that. Now, Work with Congress: [that] has been zilch as far as a request level on a national level. I am a close friend of Senator Bingaman from New Mexico, and he has often asked me for information and help on educational matters. Other than that, I have not gotten any requests. I used to get requests from Senator Kennedy many years ago. I haven't since I came back.

Q: This is Ted Kennedy?

JARAMILLO: Ted Kennedy, yes. I haven't since I came back; which has been one of my surprises, that I did not work any closer with that. I was asked to testify on something in some committee, and I was unable to, and that's been the extent of my relationship with Congress. Now I am very active in writing letters to my Congressional delegation and I organize groups of people to write to them; especially as it concerns financial aid for scholarships, and those kinds of things. I'm very involved in that. I think I shared with you of my interest in foreign service, but I didn't know it was called foreign service, and I thought it was limited to a court reporter. [Laughter] But as a child, I was interested in that. When I was named as ambassador my mother, who I've already shared, is not a highly educated woman, said in Spanish, “My little one, your desire has now become true because I remember as a child you always spoke that you wanted to work for your country overseas.” But I didn't know it was called that. As you know, we've always felt that the Foreign Service was very much an Eastern Establishment-kind of thing, and so we never had information. Having had information about the Foreign Service, and with my background, I certainly would have considered joining. It's obvious, but I had no information on it.

And then, for Special Preparation for the Foreign Service, that I had was a good, broad education, and lots of work in Latin America, and lots of work in bilingualism and biculturalism. I think that that's what prepared me for it. Empathy for people, care a lot about human beings, a great interest in human rights, a great interest in our country, a

great interest in democracy, a great interest in promoting so that the have-nots participate in the goods. And so I think that that prepared me.

Q: Indeed.

JARAMILLO: I never had an Interest in becoming a chief of mission, and I'll tell you later how that was done. I didn't know what a COM was. [Laughs] Actions leading up to your nomination—I'll talk now when I talk about becoming an ambassador.

Backing by women's groups, organized labor, political party, prominent educators—this is very, very interesting in that I didn't know that the State Department was checking with a lot of groups. I knew that the FBI was checking me out as a good American on a personal level, but I didn't know that they were checking also groups. And I do know that I was supported by all these groups, because I was told in the State Department that they were so surprised to see organized labor coming in with a letter highly supporting me, when I hadn't been active in politics. I said, “No, what they know about is that this woman is working for the poor; that's what they know. “ And the women's groups—yes, because as women found out about it, then they all got excited. Political party—my political party—all of them. I was told that normally when somebody's name is suggested, somebody else says, “Oh, but we know somebody else that's better,” and there's a lot of fighting going on. And then this one, they told me it was the first name that had ever come that everybody said, “Go.”

Q: Really? Isn't that wonderful?

JARAMILLO: Yes, it's wonderful because I hadn't been active in the party. But the people know of my work. I have a high profile in the state.

Q: Yes, you must have.

JARAMILLO: Yes, in the region; and people know me. [As for] Prominent educators—yes, I don't know of a one that wasn't supporting. Okay. [Break in tape transmission]

We're going to go ahead and just talk about briefly about my two marriages, so that you'll have an understanding of where they come in. When I was a freshman at the university, I married for the first time. That marriage lasted a long, long time. It produced three children—two boys and a girl, and it gave me an opportunity to live in a very rural area for two years in northern New Mexico which, again, helps me a great deal, because I picked up another element that is interesting—of working with the rural poor.

During that time, I went to school as much as I could. I worked in a parachute factory. We were very poor. It was a difficult time, but my children did develop into nice human beings and very good students. By the way, not with the threat that they have to earn straight A's before they come home. But by and large, they were A students. That marriage was dissolved when my youngest child was a freshman in high school. She was an early admit into the university, so she was graduating her junior year.

After my divorce, I enrolled in a Ph.D. program at the University of New Mexico. It was a very difficult time for me because, as a practicing Catholic, I had the guilt that I probably had not worked at my marriage as hard as I should have, and I had all those guilty feelings. But I had a large group of friends who advised me that I should go to school; that I was smart and that I could make it, and on, and on; and encouraged me and were wonderful mentors. And so, while I continued working full-time, like I had always worked, I went to school full-time also, and earned a Ph.D. I got a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction with a minor in Latin American studies. It was from my divorce to when I remarried, it was that period of time when I earned my degree.

In 1972, I remarried, and I married Dr. Heriberto Jaramillo, a Colombian-American. He was born in Colombia. He, too, has a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction, only his minor field of study is Educational Administration. We have been extremely happy; he has been

very supportive of my work. I always told him that he, single-handedly as a Latin male, had taken on the establishment that Latins don't want their wives to succeed; because not only did he give up his way of life, but he gave up his job, he gave up his profession. He went to a land where he could have been told, “Your wife supports you. “ He took all that and went to support me, and that he did. He worked with the Peace Corps; he worked in the Ministry of Education; he worked with both the private and public universities. He was working the field for me and he made lots of friends for the United States during those three years. He also helped me a great deal with the embassy staff because we were able to cover twice as much ground, make twice as many friends. And so I think that a lot of my success is owed to him.

Q: I think the point should be made, too, that he was doing all of this for nothing.

JARAMILLO: That's right. When we arrived in Honduras, we had thought that he could work in something; with a Ph.D. from a United States university, he could surely find a job. We quickly found out that everywhere he was offered a job, somebody would say, “There might be conflict of interest there,” because I was technically the boss of every American in the country. So we decided that we wouldn't even look; that we'd go ahead and do the best that we could without his working. The only thing that we promised ourselves, [was] that we would not dip into our savings; that we would use every penny that we were paid so that we would have a successful tenure, because we realized that a lot of other ambassadors bring money with them, and we hadn't taken any money. It would be like an educational experience that had cost us every penny that I had made. But he worked constantly, right along side me, day and night, and never earned a penny. I always felt that he had learned what American women had learned a long time ago; that they just worked hard, right next to their husbands and yet were never able to earn any money. Of course, this is changing now, but at the time that we were there, that was certainly the case.

Q: One point that I'd like to have on the tape is that your children never had a babysitter.

JARAMILLO: Okay. During my first marriage, we lived with my mother and my grandmother in an extended family-type of situation, and my children never had a babysitter. I don't understand when the young women are talking about not being able to do this or that with their careers because they don't have a babysitter. That isn't true in the situation where you have the extended family. My children were always well taken care of, even when this mom was always studying or working.

Q: Yes. Well, you have certainly been fortunate in having such a wonderful family to support you, culminating in your second marriage.

JARAMILLO: That's right. I think now I'd like to share a little bit about becoming an ambassador. I never aspired to be an Ambassador; I don't think I really, basically, understood what an ambassador did, other than in very general terms. The day that I received a call—as you recall, I've never been active in politics and I'm not rich, and I had always thought those were the two qualifications for a presidential appointment.

I had a call, and I do believe that it was from Mr. [Warren] Christopher from the State Department, in my office where I was a professor. As usual, I had a number of students in my office that I had to shoe out of the office when the phone rang. And on the phone they said that it was a call from the State Department. I thought there was a mistake, because in those days I had a lot of calls from Health, Education and Welfare because I pestered a lot of people looking for scholarships for students. But, nevertheless, it turned out to be the State Department, and this voice on the phone was telling me that President Carter had reviewed my credentials and was very impressed and wanted me to be his ambassador in Honduras. I couldn't believe it. First of all, I didn't know much about how President Carter would find out about me. I didn't have any political connections. My reaction was: “Who? Me? No.”

Mr. Christopher was very, very understanding. He was a genuine diplomat and said that maybe I'd like to think about it over the weekend, and to please call him collect if any

questions came to mind. He told me that they wanted me in a hurry but that it would be quite a long process because the FBI would have to check me out, and then I would have to go through the hearings and finally the day would come. But he wanted me to know that President Carter was very impressed with my credentials.

So I hung up and thought about it for a little while. Was that a legitimate call? Was I hearing things? What was going on? I was terribly excited. Oh, he told me that I could talk to no one about it; that the only one that I could tell was my husband. Later on, I was going to get a lot of forms, and I could talk to my doctor about it. But other than my doctor and my husband, I was to talk to no one.

So I immediately got on the phone to call my husband and I tried to talk for the first time in code. Well, needless to say, my husband didn't understand what I was talking about, and so he said, “Meet you in the car in a few minutes.” We both worked in two separate buildings, but on campus, and we shared cars. I got in the car and he tried to calm me down because I was all excited, trying to say everything that had happened that I had been told, and he was saying, “Slow down. Slow down. “

He made me go to the beginning. Where was I sitting? Who was there when the phone rang? to try to calm me down. We lived about seven minutes away from campus and I was telling him all this and he was driving. When we got parked in front of the house, and he said, “And what did you say?” “I said, ,'No'.” He took the key out of the ignition, turned around and said, “You said what?!” “I said 'no'.” He said, “I don't understand you.” And I said, “What's going to happen to us, Heri, if I were the breadwinner? I know that you would just feel awful.”

And he said, “I know who I am; I'm a very secure person. I think it's common courtesy for you to tell your President that you'd be delighted to be considered.” So, I think that the diplomat in my family was him. He said that it would not bother him; that he thought that I should get back and say that I was interested. It didn't mean that I was going to be

named; it was just to show an interest; and that he would be wholly supportive. From that day forward, I never mentioned it again. I knew that he would support me regardless. Although in the back of my mind I kept thinking, “In three or four months, after he has to sit around all day, he's not going to like it;” but I decided to take my chances. And he was just wonderful; he lived up to it.

So they got back to me from the State Department, and at that time I said I'd be delighted to be considered. I practiced it the whole weekend. And from there on, it just became a matter of waiting while I was being checked out, and my health exams. It was very difficult because I am a member of an extended family where we have always shared everything and it was very difficult for me not to tell anyone, even my mother, of this wonderful thing that might happen to me. I could share with no one, and that was a difficult thing.

Q: Do they have to wait for agr#ment before you can tell anybody?

JARAMILLO: You have to wait until you have the Senate confirmation.

Q: Oh, you have to wait 'til then?

JARAMILLO: Yes, because even then you might not become one; so you have to wait 'til the very end. So, I decided that this was a test; that they were probably checking me to see if I'd tell somebody. [Laughter] And I right away got into the whole thing of “keep your mouth shut.” It bothered me greatly, especially when one friend called me and said, “What have you been up to? I told you not to get so involved with this Hispanic movement. The FBI is checking you.”

Q: Oh, of course!

JARAMILLO: And I had no way of saying, “They're going to find out I'm a red, white and blue American.” I'd just have to say, “I just don't know.”

I had another that called me and said, “Did you know that the Carter Administration is considering you for some high post?” And I said, “High post?” you know I was trying to see how I could learn to respond without lying, and yet not give anything away. And they said, “Oh, yes. We think they're considering you for a post in the Department of Education.” So I said, “Well, who knows?” and just kind of let it go. But it was very, very difficult, because close friends were very concerned that something was happening to me, because why was the FBI checking?

I was delighted when the papers were collected and they told me that I was ready to at least go to Washington and start studying. Then the whole issue of the Panama Canal came up, and so I was bumped off, and over and over and over from when I'd be scheduled. I'd be unofficially scheduled, and they'd think, “Well, maybe Tuesday you'll get on,” and then this continued.

Q: This is for the Senate, you mean?

JARAMILLO: Yes. It just went on forever. But meanwhile, it was very good for me because I was studying about Honduras like crazy. I had started studying from the present back, as opposed to getting a historical perspective. I started going back and studying as much as I could about the country, and just preparing myself mentally for it and meeting with a lot of people in the State Department. Well, finally the day came and I had the Senate hearing and the confirmation. I was very excited about it.

It was at the time when most of us, and me for sure, had been wearing only slacks for a number of years. We wore slack suits all the time, and I didn't own many dresses. I only had one really nice navy blue dress, that was a little too short for me because now the dresses were a little longer. And I remember tugging and tugging on that dress to save my life, and especially after, when you have the party that you have at the State Department. Well, I understand that now they've cut that out, but we used to have a party in the State Department.

Q: You mean after the Senate hearing?

JARAMILLO: No, for the actual swearing-in ceremony. I had my one navy blue dress, and everybody wanted pictures of me sitting here, and me sitting there; and I'd yank on that dress constantly. And I'd think, “Oh, my goodness; in order to be an ambassador I'm going to have to get a lot of new clothes.” Then they asked us to go down to Honduras as quickly as possible. Then there really was no time for anything else.

Q: All this time, had you been waiting in Washington?

JARAMILLO: Both in Washington and here; most of it waiting here, and some of it waiting in Washington as I went up to study.

Q: Did you go to the ambassador's course, the one-week course?

JARAMILLO: No, I didn't. I did not go to the ambassador's course and I did not go to something about diplomacy. They do something with protocol and all this—none of that. They wanted me to go immediately because they were having problems in Honduras—not with the country but within the embassy itself. It appears that because they had been without an ambassador for quite some time, there was an uneasiness amongst the staff.

Q: Oh, I see.

JARAMILLO: The embassy needed someone there to help them, and so we were asked to go down as quickly as possible. So, during all that time, which had been very hectic and had turned out to be almost three months of wait, and yet we had been told, “You can't rent your house. You can't let anybody know that you're doing anything,” We were cleaning our house like mad and telling people it was spring cleaning, but we were trying to think through what we would do, and then how we would tell our family right at the very last minute, and those kinds of things. As it turned out, we were very fortunate that we were able to get everything squared away in record time.

I remember the day that there was a leak; and it wasn't a leak, but they had put on the President's pile what he was going to talk about, and it was there that they were announcing it, but they hadn't been able to reach me, so they weren't able to pull away the paper from his desk and he told the nation that I was his ambassador—that I was his selection for his ambassador to Honduras before I knew about it. People ran to my office and said, “Carter has named you an ambassador.” I had to pretend that I didn't know and I had known for three months. That really was very, very bothersome.

And I got in the car and I drove home, and I called my contact person, and I said, “There's been a leak.” She said, “It wasn't a leak. The President announced it. I wasn't able to get hold of you. I hope this hasn't caused any inconvenience.” Well, I was very polite and said, “No, it hasn't.” But it did, because I thought all along that if I talked then that spoiled my chances. I certainly thought that an ambassador, above all, would need to be able to be discreet enough that you wouldn't give away things that you were studying or discussing, or high-level kinds of information. I just didn't want somebody saying, “See, it can't be a woman, because she talks too much.” I had that in the back of head all during this time.

So, we were able to get ready. My family was very happy. Friends from all over sent me bouquets of flowers and wires and telephone calls. It was just—it was like a New Mexico celebration. . . one big fiesta.

Q: Must have been wonderful!

JARAMILLO: It was very, very nice; people were just wonderful. So, we left. At that time you couldn't go to Honduras quickly. We had to spend a night in Houston and then the next day we had to go to Guatemala; stay in Guatemala that night and the following morning get to Honduras. So it was a long, long time for a person that was as nervous as I was to get on with it.

I had heard a lot, in a lot of indirect ways—nobody ever telling me directly, but in a lot of indirect ways—I had picked up that, number one, the media was going to eat me alive because I had no experience with the media; number two, the military weren't going to pay any attention to me because I was a woman. That boiled down to, I was going to be failure. And I had heard that many, many times. Never directly, but a smart person putting two and two together; that was there.

But I knew a lot of things. I knew that I had studied like crazy during those three months and I knew Honduras well. Number two, I knew I was bicultural completely and I knew that Hondurans were going to understand me, and I knew that I was going to show them that I would be the best that I could possibly be. In every job I've always taken it like that: “I don't know much about it, but I'm going to do my very best.” That's my motto.

That morning that we left Guatemala, we were on the plane, and that's a short little distance—a short little hop—I was so nervous. And there I was, with my navy blue dress, tugging on it, tugging on it, and tugging on it, and saying to Heri, “I should have worn my slacks.”

Q: You hadn't had time to buy a new wardrobe?

JARAMILLO: No new clothes whatsoever. I was going with the clothes that I had. I had spent some money buying evening clothes because I'd owned no evening clothes. In Albuquerque, New Mexico, very few people own evening clothes. That's where I had spent some money, but daytime clothes, I hadn't. So we're getting close to Honduras, and we've landed and I can see this row of people and I can see somebody with a bouquet of flowers and I see a lot of military standing around at attention. The plane stops and I said to Heri, “You know, they told me that the media's going to eat me alive. Look at the media.” Here are all these cameras and all these people, and the television cameras and the other cameras. They asked us to come out first. Everybody just stayed in their seats and applauded; the word had gotten around that the American ambassador was on the

plane. Heri and I got down and I came down the steps, and everybody kind of rushed, taking pictures and stuff. I had met the DCM in Washington, so he came up to me and hugged me, and then his wife gave me a big bouquet of gladiolas, or roses, or something —big stemmed. So I was carrying this, and that was a very nice gesture because, you were carrying something that beautiful, kind of was very, very helpful; what do you do with your hands? You don't think of all these things. I always thought that that would be a good cue for us to tell women when they're going into their first job, that if you can hand them something that looks like a very courteous kind of thing, it's very helpful.

So I'm playing with this huge bouquet of flowers—long-stemmed flowers—and I start going down the row of people. It's the high officers from the embassy, and they're all the Americans that I'm talking to. I'm looking at them straight in the face and everybody smiled. I have a very easy smile so it was, you know, like everybody was smiling. When I got to the end there, then the Protocol Officer said that I had to go to the VIP room. I was being led to the VIP room and I thought: “God, I've never been in a VIP room, I wonder what a VIP room is? People are talking around me and I got in. Well, the media had all gone through another door and there were all these people from the media. So I walked into the room and I made eye contact with the majority, and I knew I was home. They all looked like me! [Laughter]

They all looked like me, you know. I looked at them, made eye contact—the kind of contact that you make with your cultural group.

Q: That's a wonderful quote—”They all looked like me.”

JARAMILLO: I sat there, and I sat at a place where they told me to sit. I had thought of two or three things to say informally and I said my two or three things—

Q: In Spanish.

JARAMILLO: In Spanish; in Spanish immediately. And told them that we had a lot to do together and that, you know—whatever it was; I've forgotten. So, just very informally, very—my style. I decided that moment I was going to be me.

Q: Good for you!JARAMILLO: I wasn't going to put on any airs or something; speak a certain way; I was just going to be me. So I sat down, and then the questions started. And the questions would come, and the questions would come, and we were doing fine. And then one asked me a question and I've forgotten what it was, but I didn't know the answer, and I said, "I don't know. I've been studying like crazy, but that's one that got away. I don't know, but," I said, "call me in the middle of next week and I'll have the answer ready for you." So that kind of ended it, you know, the picture-taking and all that stuff. I've always been very self-conscious that I don't photograph well. At that moment that fear was gone forever because there's no way that you can stand there and "pose". You just can't. You know, people are going to be taking pictures everywhere. I'd always been very self-conscious; that I'd make a wonderful study for somebody that was really mean with the caricatures. I just knew that I was going to be blasted in the newspapers. Oh, I had thought of all those things.

We got into the car and here I was in the back seat of a car with a guard and a driver. I'd never had any of these conveniences. I sat in the car and I asked again what their names were—the guard and the driver. Then I said, "What was the name of the man that asked me the question that I didn't know?" That was my first question to them.

Q: Were you and your husband alone in this car with the guard and the driver?

JARAMILLO: Yes.

Q: The DCM wasn't with you?

JARAMILLO: No, wait a minute; it was the DCM and me; I think my husband and the DCM's wife were in the second car. I said, "What was the name of that reporter?" They

told me the name and I immediately made a mental note of it, and I remembered what he looked like. I'm a teacher. You know, I work with 40 students and I can remember who asked the question.

We drove off with the flags and all this stuff, up to the residence, and we came in and I was introduced to everybody there. I kept that in the back of my mind, that young man who had asked the question. Well, they had prepared lunch and I was taken for a tour. It was the biggest house I had ever been in. When it over I didn't know if it was two levels or three levels, and it seemed to me I had seen so many bathrooms I couldn't believe it. Later on, Heri and I went around and counted them, and there were eleven.

Q: Eleven bathrooms in the residence? Good heavens!

JARAMILLO: So we knew that it was going to be different; a beautiful garden and everything. We immediately started in. They asked if I wanted to take the afternoon off to unpack, and I said, “No. I want to go meet people.” So we talked to all the residence staff and then I went off and I met people informally. They had planned a big thing at a certain hour the following day. So, I got into it immediately.

Q: Didn't you, though? Was there some sort of a function that evening? Within the embassy?

JARAMILLO: I don't think so. I think that it was lunch and that they had planned to leave the evening for us to rest. Well, I didn't use the afternoon to rest, and then the evening is when we did whatever little unpacking we needed to do. It was the personal one, because the other one—there were people doing it. I kept helping them and Heri kept pulling me back. I would say, “I've been a servant. I know what they're feeling like, so I do it, too,” you know. So, immediately—this empathy—those servants became my family. We just had this wonderful thing of those people doing everything to please, because we became a

family instantly. So then I already had the support built into the residence. Then I went to my big meeting with the total embassy staff in a garden and I got up and—

Q: This is the next day?

JARAMILLO: The next morning. I had prepared something to say, and I said that I wanted to say it in both languages because I knew that there were some Hondurans in the group that spoke little English. So I addressed the group in Spanish and so the Hondurans came aboard!

Q: Sure!

JARAMILLO: Then I told them in English what I thought that we needed to do together and I said that I was team player and that I already had learned enough in Washington to know that the ambassador could do sort of what the ambassador pleased, but that they needed to know I wasn't going to be that kind of ambassador. I was a team player and in order for me to look good they had to look good.

Q: You're so right.

JARAMILLO: I heard lots of stuff later on. Of course, the first two days they didn't tell me, but later on, they said, “God, it was just the right thing to say.”

Q: They must have gone home so relieved.

JARAMILLO: Yes. They had had a hard time at the Embassy. There had been problems; that's why they wanted me to go. There was a lot of friction and a lot of unrest. Due to some difficulty before the former ambassador left, and then the long period of time without an ambassador, tension seemed to be high. It was thought that if the ambassador came on the scene, the tension would dissipate quickly.

Q: Had they been without an ambassador for quite a while?

JARAMILLO: Yes, they had a DCM for quite a while. The other thing is—another skill that I have as a teacher is, I remember people's names. I was introduced to people and then the next morning I'd walk in and address them by their names. See, those are skills I had from working with large groups of strangers all the time. So quickly I learned their names; I knew something about their families; I knew they had some problems and they were all just great people with me.

Q: What did you do—sit down with file cards, to remember them?

JARAMILLO: No, I just remembered where they were sitting, or where they were standing, or what they were wearing. I do my own game.

Q: Well, who told you they had problems?

JARAMILLO: Oh, that quickly came through. Whoever got close to me, (end of tape)-

I got involved. If there was a sick child, I got on the phone and called directly: “I heard that so-an-so was sick. How is he? How's he getting along today? I'd do the kind of personal things that I think this is about. Not only did I do that with the embassy staff; I did it a lot with them at the beginning, but as I paid my courtesy calls, the same thing with the others. To me, it was just an extension of my campus. I already had all these people skills on campus and all I was doing was using them in another setting. These are the same skills that I've had since I was a first-grade schoolteacher. I learn people's names; I learn what troubles them; I learn what pleases them. I personalize everything. I thank people for good work. I frown a lot if you don't do good work; you know if I'm pleased. I'm an easy person to read. I was very complimentary of good work and people knew it, you know.

I went to work at 7 and 7:30 in the morning. People were shocked. Ambassadors are supposed to show up at 9 or 10, or whatever. I showed up; so pretty soon everybody else was showing up at 7:30—never said a word. That's just my work style. I took many brown

bags to the ambassadorial papers at lunch. [Laughs] And I worked right through the noon hour, just like I do on campus.

Q: Didn't change your style.

JARAMILLO: Oh, no; oh, no. I did exactly what I had always done; be a people person and cram my day with work; get as much work done as I possibly could. Then I started, you know, doing a lot more entertaining at noon. But at the beginning, I used that to set my tone. My tone was: work in a friendly atmosphere. That's what I wanted; productive work, but in a human environment; in a place where people want to work and work hard, and they're going to get a pat on the shoulder when they do good work. And everybody was just wonderful with me. We could go into each single division and people just stand out, people that went that extra mile to get work done. Then with the Hondurans, it was the same thing. In my courtesy calls, I got to know people. I was a novelty; I was the first American Hispanic woman that had gone any place, so they felt that they were honored. Many of them told me, “What an honor it is for us to have the first woman Ambassador.” So that worked nice for me, too; you see?

Q: How nice!

JARAMILLO: I'm telling you; I just have a lot of good luck. I quickly made friends with everybody across the board—the military, the church people, the business people, the campesinos, the media. By the way, the media, I guess, became my real friends. They were just wonderful. I know that many times I didn't say things as eloquently as it came out in the newspaper.

Q: Really?

JARAMILLO: I know that. Oh, they were wonderful. And on television, they learned that I take horrible side pictures, and that if I look into the camera, they would capture it—it was obvious to me; it was just obvious.

Q: Went out of the way to shoot your best angle.

JARAMILLO: They went out of their way to be nice, and to ask me questions that I could really expand, 'cause if they had wanted to, they could have asked me all kinds of questions that I wouldn't have known a thing about. So, we became friends instantly. It was just wonderful.

Q: It's a real success story.

JARAMILLO: And then what I decided to do was really get to know the country as quickly as I could; so that I was out constantly, just constantly—put in a day in the embassy, make sure that everything is going well; go on another day to some trip. I have this excessive energy; I never get tired. So I can start my day at 5:00 in the morning and I can end it at midnight and start at 5 the next day, and end it at midnight. I never get tired, especially if I'm enjoying my work, and I loved every minute of it, every minute of it. It was just wonderful.

Q: And that enthusiasm, of course, is very infectious.

JARAMILLO: It certainly is. If you're happy, people around you are happy. You know, if the boss sets the tone. . . I remember the Marines. I always was wonderful friends with the Marines. And so many of them said, “Gees, this is my second embassy, or my third embassy, and this is the first ambassador that knows me by name. This is the first ambassador that says 'Good morning' or 'Good afternoon,'” every time I went by them. You know, it's common courtesy; just common courtesy. I think my greatest skill is: I am a people person. I think that's what it boils down to. So then all the technical stuff is easy because you can learn that quickly; you just read and ask questions and you're quickly boned up on it. But if you don't have the personality where you relax people, put them at ease, where people are willing to work with you as a member of a team, then you've got

problems; I don't care how smart you are. And if you combine native intelligence—that you can read and understand the technical stuff—and set it in that situation, you're on.

Q: May I digress just a moment? We were talking about questions and the media asking you questions. Can you remember questions that were asked of you at the Senate hearing? Or was it strictly pro forma?

JARAMILLO: At the Senate hearing?

Q: There was no opposition to your nomination.

JARAMILLO: The questions were questions—like they wanted to know how many people, and what languages were spoken.

Q: Oh, I see.

JARAMILLO: I'm sure that when they asked what languages were spoken, they thought I'd say, for sure, “Spanish.” And I said, “Five percent speak old Elizabethan English, five percent speak a patois, and ninety percent speak Spanish.” I'm sure they didn't expect those details.

Q: Oh, no. [laughs]

JARAMILLO: But I'd been studying, don't forget; and studying is my thing. I remember one of the questions, the last question, was: “And what makes you think that you could be an ambassador? You've only been a schoolteacher?” And that made me mad.

Q: Who asked that question?

JARAMILLO: I don't remember. I think maybe it turned out to be good. Maybe he did it with a tongue-in-cheek, because I came back and I said, “Well, for all the kinds of things that I'm saying now—that a teacher learns, that a teacher learns to work with many,

many people of diverse backgrounds; and you have to focus it so that you come out with a common purpose. “ And those kinds of things, you know. That was the last question asked, so I never thought if it was asked with tongue-in-cheek, because they knew they'd get a little rise, or what had happened.

There was one, I imagine that it's the usual letter from whoever checks that there are not too many Presidential appointees. You get this letter from somebody from this group that says, “We want you to know we have nothing against you personally, but we're going to fight your appointment because you're not a member of the Foreign Service.” And I had gotten such a letter.

Q: Oh, you had gotten it—that's from AFSA (American Foreign Service Association).

JARAMILLO: Right. Then I had written a letter to them and said, “Good for you for caring who goes to represent our country; and I encourage you to look into the backgrounds of people, myself included.” The day that I went to my Senate confirmation, somebody came up to me and said, “We were right in there rooting for you; we decided not to fight.”

Q: Good.

JARAMILLO: So I thought nobody was out to get me. I thought it was very honest; that if I had not answered intelligently, they would have said, “Send her back home,” but that I was getting a fair shot at it. I was very nervous; it just felt awful for me, sitting at that little table with all those people up there.

Q: Were you alone?

JARAMILLO: Senator Dominici sat next to me and I don't remember if someone else made it or not. Gees, I'm starting to block out all this. I know that Senator Dominici walked in, but I had been sitting all alone for quite a few minutes because he was running from some

place where they were voting. He said some nice things right when I was going to get started.

Q: But were you the only candidate before the panel?

JARAMILLO: There were about six that day, I think. Raul Castro, who had been the Governor in Arizona, he went right before me; and he was famous. He was a governor and had been an ambassador previously, and T.V. cameras had come in and really focused on him, and then I had to wait until they dismantled all that. Then by the time I got there; there I am. You know, there had been all this fanfare and here I am, all alone. The people that had been working there—the person that had been assigned with me, to help me when I was studying in the State Department—I knew he was in the audience. And I knew there were several people that I had gotten to know during those days that were in the audience, wishing me well. Everybody had been nice to me.

Q: Everybody was nice.

JARAMILLO: Oh, yes.

Q: Had you done the usual running around, from office to office, being briefed?

JARAMILLO: Oh yes. And when they didn't take me, I went alone.

Q: You went anyway.

JARAMILLO: Oh, yes. And when they wanted to talk to me about art for the embassy, I said I had no time; that I was busy studying some place else. I'm sure I caused a little flap there, but I was more interested in that I know the content. Someone said, “You mean, you haven't selected your artwork for the residence?” And I said, “No, and I don't intend to. We'll get along with whatever we take.”

I just felt that it was important for the cause of women and the cause of Hispanics that you go there and you do a professional job, and they weren't going to evaluate me on what was hanging on the walls; they were going to evaluate me on what I knew and what I had upstairs, and how I did it.

Between the Senate confirmation and the swearing-in, I made lots of friends. You know, you hear when you're out here, “Oh my God, those people don't want any outsiders coming in. They're always going to isolate you, and you're always going to feel an outsider.” I want you to know that I felt like insider the minute I got there. People were just wonderful with me. I was interested in what they were interested in. I wasn't interested in how many dogs or horses I could ship; I was interested in what is our relationship with Honduras? Where do we have problems?

Q: The important things.

JARAMILLO: It was all, I think, in a high, kind of professional level. I think a lot of them, even though they might have had a lot of doubts, after we would converse in this debate, knew that if I goofed, it wasn't going to be because I hadn't tried to do my best.

Q: Right, right. What about your swearing-in ceremony?

JARAMILLO: My swearing-in ceremony was—

Q: Was that right away?

JARAMILLO: I think it was like maybe one or two days later, because after I made it in the Senate, then I called my husband; and then my husband got on the plane, so it must have been the following day or two days later. I've forgotten. Vance was our Secretary of State then. Something interesting that I found out immediately; they said that I was to have a party that went with it. I said, “Fine. I'm the party type.” And they said it had to be in the building. I said, “Fine.” Then they said it had to be catered by a certain individual or

a certain company. It turned out that it was horribly expensive. And that was my first shot at—”Oh my God! We aren't going to have nachos.” We were going to have whatever it was that we were having, and it was just very, very expensive. When I saw how much it was per person, I said that I knew very few people in town, and I wasn't bringing anybody from New Mexico. I would have just died if I would have had to invite 100 people, because oh my goodness, it was expensive! All the expenses that I had had I was having to foot myself. I was going to be reimbursed later, but for a salary for a university professor, that's tough. It's a lot of money.

Q: And that party you pay for yourself.

JARAMILLO: Yes. And so we had the party. I did know some people in Washington, and they were invited. It was a small group, maybe 20-25 people that I knew, and then I was told certain people within the State Department had to be invited. Since I didn't know anyone, we invited whoever they told me that I was supposed to invite. I know that at that time there were already two or three people. It wasn't just the person helping me, but two or three people that had gotten very interested in me and were helping and advising who should get an invitation.

Q: Who held the Bible?

JARAMILLO: My husband.

Q: And who did the actual swearing-in?

JARAMILLO: I don't remember.

Q: I presume it was up on the 8th floor with the diplomatic rooms.

JARAMILLO: Yes.

Q: Well now, let's jump back to Honduras. How about presenting your credentials?

JARAMILLO: Oh, that was a neat day. For presenting the credentials, it was again all the flags and the ceremony, and all this very fun stuff. Getting to the place where we were going to present the credentials and seeing all these young men in uniform lining the halls, and they're holding the swords up, and I kind of walked in under the swords to where the president was waiting. I kept looking at everybody in the face, and they were all stealing a look at me, and I was making eye contact with them and so some would smile. [Laughs] I was very, very nervous. That was my first big official thing with the Hondurans.

Q: Was this very soon after you arrived?

JARAMILLO: Yes, very, very soon. I went up to the president, and I had been briefed that I was to make small, polite talk for about five minutes. We sat down and we started talking, and somebody had to say that it was time to stand up or do whatever we were going to do next; go do the champagne, or something. I liked the general that was the president of the country at that time, on the spot, because he did everything that he could to put me at ease. I really appreciated that because he could have been a big ol' stuffy guy, and yet he was so nice—asking me if my husband and I were pleased and if we were being treated right; and just kind of things to make you feel good, before getting into the serious stuff of how we were going to have to work very hard with what was facing us—just a nice human being. That was my first, very public kind of thing, with all the T. V. cameras.

Q: Had you met President Carter at this point? And did you have your photographs taken with him?

JARAMILLO: No. I had never seen him.

Q: You had not?

JARAMILLO: Never, up to this point.

Q: He wasn't big on ceremonies.

JARAMILLO: Right. I had not seen him. I saw him much more during the time that I was there. When I came up, I always got to see him, and I got to see him, not because of something that was happening in the State Department-White House; it was because Esteban Torres worked in the White House. He's now a senator or a congressman from California. And Abelardo Valdez; he was Protocol Officer while I was down there. They were in the White House, so I would get invited to go have lunch with them in the White House; and then I would get to visit with President Carter, maybe in a corridor or in a portico—that kind of stuff. It was almost like on a personal level because of my connections with the people that worked in the White House.

I also got to visit with the president in a really neat way. When I came up with then General Paz I was with in Louisiana, in New York, and in Washington, D.C., and at that time I got to go to all the formal things with President Carter. Then when I came back, I was in a big, big Hispanic gathering where President Carter was the guest of honor, and he was wonderful, just wonderful with me. I saw him on four different occasions. One of it was formal—when the president had come up; the other three were because of other connections, not because of the State Department. I always had the feeling that if I needed to talk to the president, that I could. There was this very good feeling that there was a direct connection with him if I needed to. Because I had no problems, you didn't need to use a dissent channel of some kind, or go directly to the President. We worked as a team in our embassy.

Oh, by the way; a little extra aside: when we sent our things from Honduras, they were stored in Washington because we lived just in an apartment for six months. When we came home, there'd been water leakage in one of the boxes where I had my photograph of President Carter, with the things that he had written. So I wrote to him in Georgia and told him what had happened to my picture, and he sent me another one.

Q: That's the sort of thing one would expect of him.

JARAMILLO: Yes, autographed and everything.

Q: Now the relations between the U.S. and Honduras at that time were quite good, weren't they?

JARAMILLO: Very good. The relations were good. I'm sure that we had a great interest in them becoming a democracy, and that hadn't happened; they hadn't had elections for nine years. They'd been under the military rule for nine years. But quote, “we were friends.”

Q: Yes, well, we're their biggest customer.

JARAMILLO: And vice-versa. They buy everything from us. And so, yes, we weren't fighting in any way. We were also trying to encourage them to settle their border affair with Salvador; they were still fighting over the border after the war.

Q: After that soccer war?

JARAMILLO: Oh, yes. The relationship wasn't very good there, so there was another thing that was going on.

Q: You, as an ambassador, had the right to select your own secretary and your own Deputy Chief of Mission. I gather that you kept the Deputy Chief who was there at the post.

JARAMILLO: I did for a while, until there was the natural rotation.

Q: I see.

JARAMILLO: I believe very, very strongly that you don't yank people out right and left. I had no way of knowing if the person would turn out to be an outstanding one or not. The same thing happened for the secretary. The secretary was very concerned that she was toward her last few years before retirement and that I would come in and quote, “bring

my own secretary." That was a thing that I did immediately upon arriving: I said I was not bringing any of my own personnel; that they were the professionals and I expected their guidance; that together we would make it. As it turned out, the secretary and I became such good friends. She retired and we remained very, very good friends. The DCM stayed until his normal turnover, at what time he was going to change posts, and that's, when I selected Fernando [Fred Rondon].

I went to Washington and studied a lot of vitaes and talked to a lot of people, and a lot of people tried to politic and tell me how great this one was and how great the other one was. I thought, if it was just because I needed a person there, I would have tried to talk the other one to stay, although I don't think I could have because the wife wanted a change also. But I was after a certain type. I was after a type that believed in hard work, like I do, and that was completely bilingual and that was completely bicultural; that's what I was looking for. Because I felt that that way, whatever I couldn't do, that person would do; whatever that person couldn't do, I could continue. That way, we were, again, getting two for the price of one.

Q: You looked toward a symbiotic relationship with your DCM, didn't you?

JARAMILLO: That's right. And I did look around and see if somebody would suggest a woman that would be available. I had thought it would be marvelous if the ambassador and the DCM would be women. But, lo and behold! Not one was surfaced in the process that we were using to surface them, who was free and all that. Not one. And I don't know if it was because of the language that I had stipulated, because I think since Latin America hadn't been paid attention to by women, I think Jean [Wilkowski] is the only one that had been around Latin America at that level, and at that time Sally Shelton had gone down to the other post.

Q: Hadn't she been nominated to go to El Salvador and it fell through? She was serving in Washington, I believe, at this time; because she didn't go out to her post until 1979.

JARAMILLO: Til later, much later.

Q: You were only the third woman ever to be named [ambassador] to a Latin American country, you know. There was Clare Boothe Luce, named to Brazil—didn't go; Sally Shelton, named to El Salvador—didn't go; and yourself. There had been one in the Caribbean, but that's all. Women have not been in Central or South America, and I don't see why not.

JARAMILLO: I don't either, because they're naturals for the way women work. Women have this observation power, this nurturing, this people-relationship that's, “Let's talk it out instead of fight it.” You know, these kinds of skills that they have. They're natural for a setting where that's the way they operate, too. Just a natural setting for women. I don't know—they've had so many military all over that maybe that that was the feeling that they're not going to pay attention to women. Like I tell you, the military in a Latin country—it's up to us.

Q: Yes, absolutely. How big was your staff?

JARAMILLO: I think we had about 200 American families, and there were about a little bit better than 200 Hondurans in the Embassy. Then we had a large contingency of Peace Corps at the time; it was the second largest in Latin America. I've forgotten the exact numbers, but a large Peace Corps group. And then I think we had—gee, I'm trying to say about 4,000—and that sounds about right—of just Americans in business or in church-related groups, or whatever they were doing in the country; small businesses, big businesses, the banana companies, and like that.

Q: What about AID?

JARAMILLO: AID—

Q: Pretty good size, was it?

JARAMILLO: Pretty good size, pretty good size; doing lots of exciting work in small technology. With Carter, there was such an emphasis that the money had to go to the poorest of the poor, and so there was a lot of emphasis that money not stay at ministry levels but that it really work directly.

Q: Well, you had a very good size mission, didn't you?

JARAMILLO: Yes. Now it must look like peanuts, because now I understand it's grown by leaps and bounds. But the military part of it is what has grown. The military group at the time I was there was 11; by the time I left it was seven.

Q: Really? Military group, 11 when you came?

JARAMILLO: Yes, and seven when I left. We were working toward democratization of society. [Laughs]

Q: The military group within the embassy?

JARAMILLO: Ah-huh. The Americans. Wonderful people, both in the Air Force and the Army. We became very close friends. I still think that that's the way I'm connected with the military now, for speaking engagements.

Q: Oh, really?

JARAMILLO: I'm telling you, I lucked out everywhere. [Hearty laugh]

Q: I think there's more to it than that. Now, how about the staff and country team meetings? You're a very organized person, so I'm sure these were very well organized, too.

JARAMILLO: It was a lot of fun. You had your country team meetings, and I guess the way it had been handled had always been probably very bureaucratic, with the ambassador

being the center of attention and everybody kind of catering to the ambassador. I came in with my team concept, okay? We all have to know what the other is doing. And we have to use this time to share problems, to see how we can help each other with the problems. We all have to anticipate for each other. Do you anticipate a problem in your area that we need to know about so we can be supportive? So it became a very close group of sharing time. I don't think that the word sharing had been used very much. Within the month that I was there I heard them say, “I think we should share. “ And I would just—inside—oh, it made me feel so good, because I kept saying, “This is the time for us to share, both problems and things that are going very well, to see if we can pick up skills from somebody else that we could use.”

It became a time of seeing where we had been, and anticipating, and then when somebody was writing a proposal or something, if we all had ideas for input, and those kinds of things. It was at that time that I would make assignments, if things had come into my desk that needed taking care of; then I would assign and ask people to write things. Toward the middle of my stay there, people were volunteering right and left to do things.

Q: Were they?

JARAMILLO: Oh, yes. I would just mention that it would nice if we had—and somebody would say, “Well, I'll take a crack at that.” It was a real good team effort. People really worked just great.

Oh, let me tell you one thing that I'm sure has never happened at another one, maybe where there's women. I found out when their birthdays were, and if their birthdays were on country team meeting day, we sang “Happy Birthday. “ [Both laugh] The first day we did that, I could just see one eye looking at another one: “Oh, God! Now we have to sing 'Happy Birthday.'” I did all these kinds of things that were just fun things; just break the ice; that we don't take ourselves so seriously. I know it's serious work, but we don't need to act as though we're God about it.

Q: Did you find that the Foreign Service Officers are a pretty serious group? Take themselves seriously?

JARAMILLO: At two levels. You have them taking themselves very seriously at their work place, and being a heck of a lot of fun at the informal, social level. And what I was trying to do was trying to get some of that fun that I'd see in them at the social level, and the sense of humor, over here too.

Q: After a while, did the "Happy Birthday" singing go off all right? [Laughter]

JARAMILLO: Oh yes; oh yes.

Q: Did you find many parallels between—well, obviously, you operated the same way you had at home, but did you find many parallels between your staff at the embassy and the staff at a university?

JARAMILLO: Yes, except that at the embassy there's always this feeling of the hierarchy. This one's in command and we all do things to please. And in the university, there's no such respect. [Laughter] Everybody's kind of even. This whole feeling of, "That person could ruin my career" is very prevalent in the Foreign Service, because they get evaluated with adjectives. And in the university, you get evaluated on performance-based criteria. You brought in so much money with a research project; so many students said you were an excellent teacher; you've written so many articles. In the Foreign Service, I really feel sorry for them, because they're really—at least back then—at the whim and fancy; if they got a person that cared about human beings, their work would show. If it didn't, I don't know what would happen to those people.

Q: That's right.

JARAMILLO: So, I kind of thought that that wasn't a fair system, because I kept thinking, to evaluate them you have to get a dictionary that's full of adjectives because you've got to

have an adjective that's higher than the one from last time in order to make it. Now what I don't know is what happens when it gets into Washington and there are groups looking at it. Maybe that's where the fairness comes. But in the written one, I always felt that I was not doing justice. I would have liked to have seen a chart where I could use very specific criteria that they were really doing superior work. In a narrative, it gets lost because it looks like you've inflated it.

Q: Yes. But if you don't inflate it—

JARAMILLO: Then they don't get anywhere.

Q: That's right.

JARAMILLO: I didn't think the system was quite right and I would have loved to have stayed in there and made a little difference, because I felt very strongly that if you got a person that—say, today didn't feel all that great about writing all these great adjectives, maybe you wouldn't get even a promotion. Now that's not fair, because maybe that person had been working very hard. Or if you had any kind of a disagreement with your ambassador, and why shouldn't you? The ambassador is just like anybody else. And yet, that person was going to be able to write something that would stay in your record. If I had gotten to stay, which I had thought I was—if I had gotten to stay, it was one of the things that I wanted to work on. I thought it really needed some serious adjusting. The information that came down, that from now on not everybody that came in should aspire to be an ambassador, but only a small percentage; something like if you join the Army, only five can be generals, I always felt that for that system it was going to be even more necessary to have a different kind of evaluation. Not one that was based so much on “Who do you know?” “Who went with you to Foreign Service School?” That put Foreign Service officers where you played games of calling friends: “Could you put in a good word for me?” And I thought that's degrading. These are professionals. They should be judged on the work that they do. But that's part of the system. I don't know if the system has changed,

and I also can't talk with any authority on what happens after those original papers came in. But those original papers I didn't like. I worked very hard at them because the people that worked for me were very talented. But I didn't think it was fair, because if there were people that weren't as talented some place else, and somebody else could think of other adjectives, then that wasn't fair.

Q: Yes, indeed. You have said already that you got along very well with the president [of Honduras], and I have been told that you had an unusually warm relationship with him; that he thought the world of you, and thought of you "as one of us"—not as "the American from over there."

JARAMILLO: [Laughter["The American snooper." Now I've got to clarify that I had three different relationships during those three years. When I went, President Melgar Castro was there, and we became very close friends, very close friends. He had aspirations, it appeared, of being something like a populist president; that maybe he would leave the military and run as a civilian, and they quickly put a stop to that, and they "disappeared" him and he got lost wherever military generals that have individual aspirations disappear to. And then we had a junta come. And the junta were three people: one from the Air Force, one from the Army, and one from the Police. And I had a marvelous working relationship with the three gentlemen there. And then that one got dissolved and the President that I think you're alluding to came aboard. I had wonderful relationships with four people.

Q: Four people. Was President Paz the one?

JARAMILLO: Paz was the one that was there the last. And we really had a wonderful relationship.

Q: That was Melgar Castro you were talking about, who met you the first day?

JARAMILLO: Yes, Melgar Castro.

Q: I'm glad you cleared that up.

JARAMILLO: And Paz—we just became good friends. President Paz was not highly educated, very obvious from a rural background. He had been a war hero in the Salvadoran/Honduras—had been a big war hero that all the people admired and loved because of that. Okay.

Q: That was the El Salvador war, you say, he was a hero?

JARAMILLO: Yes. He was a hero. And because we became good friends, he trusted me. He saw me, well again, as the cultural kind of bonding. You're not seeing citizenship; you're seeing identical cultures. You are seeing that you have the same belief patterns, core values, etc. Because I come from a poor background, that quickly came through, and so they could identify with me. Then, at the other extreme, because I'm educated, I can quickly identify with the rich, because now I know what the rich value. So I was very fortunate that way.President Paz and I met probably many more times than an ambassador and a president of a country will meet, simply because we were friends. I would call him at any time that I needed to speak to him and he'd come visit me, and he would call me any time he needed to visit with me, and we would meet. Sometimes it would be on a daily basis.

Q: Terrific for the U.S. Government that you had that relationship.

JARAMILLO: The U.S. Government had information about the rest of Central America through my embassy.

Q: Oh, I'm sure.

JARAMILLO: So that was just a real good feeling; especially that I remember some people hinting, “The military aren't going to pay any attention to you, lady.” Ha ha.

Q: Yes, yes. (Laughing] That's what they all said.

JARAMILLO: A very special relationship. I think he really loved Honduras. I think that maybe if he had been an educated man, he would have done things differently, but I really believe he loved it. With all his problems, his personal problems, he really cared. To think that they were willing to give up power without bloodshed is something that, I think, should go down in the history books. I feel very strongly that they could have said, “We will not give up power and we'll fight these civilians to the bloody end. They've done it in other places.

Q: I know. Was he one of the Junta?

JARAMILLO: Yes.

Q: He was the Army one?

JARAMILLO: Yes, he was the Army one.

Q: That is amazing, especially for that part of the world, where there is such a history of turmoil.

JARAMILLO: That's right. I think it's just one of the success stories of the century, to think that you helped convince him that this was the best way that it should be done.

Q: Yes. And it certainly saved the U.S.'s skin, didn't it?

JARAMILLO: We landed up with a friend. We wouldn't have had that friend. It would have been Costa Rica alone. And Costa Rica—if you've been into the papers, you know that they “misbehaved.” It really was Honduras that was left where there wasn't that kind of problem and that we could go in there. I didn't realize we were going to go in the way we are. Maybe I would have done things differently, but at the time I really believed that we

wanted that country to become a democracy, if the military would give up some of their power.

Q: What about the other officials of the government—the cabinet and the legislature?

JARAMILLO: Oh yes. I can honestly say that I don't know of a Minister during the three years, and there were a lot of changes, who weren't close personal friends.

Q: Really?

JARAMILLO: Yes. And that's across the board—that's Housing, that's Education, that's Foreign Relations. I have no problems making friends. It's just par for the course; I just make friends everywhere I go. That they happen to occupy high level positions, in my way of thinking, didn't make any difference. It did make a lot of difference for my work, but in my personal relations, it didn't; it was the same kind of friendship that I cultivated with the cook and the gardeners.

Q: Yes, yes. Did the same sort of feeling apply to your other diplomatic colleagues from other embassies?

JARAMILLO: Other embassies? You mean—

Q: The British Embassy, the French Embassy?

JARAMILLO: No. There was a lot of stuff told to me, but “don't tell the other ambassadors. “ I had lots of information that was related to me, not to tell the diplomatic corps.

Q: What about the rest of the corps? Were they aware that you were so much on the inside? They must have been aware that you were on the inside.

JARAMILLO: No, this lady—I did—

Q: You were very discreet, I'm sure. But—

JARAMILLO: Oh, very discreet. They would insinuate that I knew more than they did. So when something would come up, they'd say, “Oh, Mari-Luci, you certainly know about this. The Americans always know it. “ And I'd say, “Know what? Why would we know more than you guys?” You know, and kind of laugh it off. But yes, I did. I had all of the info before it happened, of everything that ever took place in the country. I had advance notice of everything that ever happened at high levels. And sometimes I had to fake naiveness in public places so that I wouldn't give myself away; that I had had privileged information for days on end before something had happened.

Q: Were the others jealous of you? Or did you have good relations with other ambassadors?

JARAMILLO: No, all the ambassadors were my friends, too.

Q: They were?

JARAMILLO: Oh, yes. Most of them loved to dance. [Laughs]

Q: Oh, really?

JARAMILLO: The mean woman ambassador was fun. Yes, we had a real good relationship with all the other countries. You see, we weren't mad at anybody, okay? We weren't doing anything. There were a couple of countries that had their nose out of joint a little bit. But then after we talked the first time they came in, and we said, “Look, it doesn't have anything to do with what's been happening there. You and I have a job to do here,” that was the end of that. The only one where I got uncomfortable was when we broke relationships with Taiwan. The Taiwanese Ambassador and I were especially close friends, and when we broke off relations, we weren't supposed to do any formal kinds of interchanges. We constantly did nice things for each other and so it was-

Q: You couldn't invite him officially then?

JARAMILLO: Officially, I couldn't, but he could.

Q: He could?

JARAMILLO: He could. He was a very nice man and that was a little bit hard because I was supposed to invite everybody else and leave him out, in a tiny little country, when he was so good to me on a personal level and loved this country [USA]. His children and his wife were in this country [USA].

Q: What did you do? How did you get around it?

JARAMILLO: Oh, I had to do a lot of fancy stepping around it. I had to do a lot of “Mr. Ambassador, this is personal. This is not because I'm the ambassador of the United States. This is Mari-Luci, your friend.” And it was very hard.

Q: And if he invited you, could you go?

JARAMILLO: Oh, yes.

Q: Oh, you could go?

JARAMILLO: Oh, yes.

Q: Well, now isn't that crazy? What kind of a policy is that?

JARAMILLO: It says that you can't—You can't do things with him. You can't invite him to the 4th of July celebration in your home.

Q: What about Iron Curtain diplomats?

JARAMILLO: We didn't have any.

Q: No Iron Curtain? No Russians?

JARAMILLO: No. That's in Costa Rica.

Q: No Chinese?

JARAMILLO: You see, we just had Taiwan.

Q: Well, that was a problem then you didn't have.

JARAMILLO: No.

Q: And I know, from what I've been told, that you had friends across the board with local people—all walks of life.

JARAMILLO: All walks of life; all social classes.

Q: All over the country.

JARAMILLO: All over the country. Rural (end of tape)— We were told many times that no government officials had ever been there.

Q: Really?

JARAMILLO: That was just a fabulous trip. It was arranged by people in the embassy—Hondurans in the embassy—that had contacts in these places. The owner of the television stations had become my friend, and so then he set it up. So, they were in places that we stopped; they televised.

Q: What an experience!

JARAMILLO: Oh, yes. It was seven days in a Jeep. People would say, “Oh, Mari-Luci, there are no hotels in that area.” And I'd say, “But they're beautiful homes.” “But you don't

know anybody." "No, but I know people that know people and had already had it set up." It was just wonderful.

Q: So you just know that country in and out, don't you?

JARAMILLO: Yes. In and out.

Q: Did your husband go with you on those trips?

JARAMILLO: Oh, yes; oh, yes. He went on every single trip that—this kind of a trip. Once in a while he didn't get to go; when, let's say, we were going to go by plane someplace, and in an official party there wasn't space for him. But just about any time—especially if we were driving, he always went.

Q: Wonderful. Was encouraging the country to have democratic elections the major problem you had when you were there?

JARAMILLO: Yes, that was one of my goals; to encourage them to have free elections—really free elections. And that meant, encourage them to release power. And in sociology, you learn that if group A has power, they never turn it over voluntarily to group B. And I kept telling myself, "There goes Sociology 101. " How am I ever going to do this?" But it happened.

Q: Just by force of talking to them and explaining?

JARAMILLO: Just by mediation, of just talking out loud, consequences; talking out loud what it would mean to the country, talking the virtues of a democracy; talking what happens to people that participate in their government—all that good stuff that we learned in elementary school.

Q: And they don't have that same background to draw on; so you had to do a lot of convincing.

JARAMILLO: A lot of convincing. And you can't do it in formal ways; you can't do it in lectures. You have to take advantage of every opportune moment; sometimes together, sometimes separately. At cocktail parties, you would drop a hint to one and you drop something else to another; and then you pray like hell that those two talk to each other and they form a kernel of an idea. So that it's not obvious. I know that, certainly, I could have chosen to be very obvious so I'd get a lot of public credit for it. I chose not to. I played a role behind the scenes that only a few Americans know my role. I didn't think that I needed that adulation. “Oh, my God! She's brought us democracy!” I think that that's one of the ways that this country gets that reputation of having so many damn ugly Americans out there; that we want to take credit for what we did. I think we go to serve our government, and we should hide in the woodwork. You do your thing without people knowing.

Like I said a while ago, I had to pretend I was naive. Surely it would have been good for my ego when all these ambassadors are standing around saying, “I wonder what's going to happen,” and I'd say, “Three days ago I found out what was going to happen.” You don't do that. You don't do that; you don't need that. Where you get your rewards is in knowing that you did a fine job. That's where you get your rewards. But if you're going to send people as ambassadors that need stroking, that's bad, that's bad. You always have to be in the limelight; everybody has to be asking for permission. I think that is wrong, just terribly wrong because then that creates that whole thing of—this horrible hierarchy, as opposed to a team. Then you've got it all broken down to this one can't talk to that one and that one can't talk to that one. Listen, if we all knew what we were doing, we should each of us take advantage of dropping those hints, then regrouping: “Where did you drop a hint?” “Where did you drop a hint?” And the work gets done. So if I had to do it over again, I'd choose the same strategies.

Q: Did you find that the Carter administration's emphasis on human rights was a plus for you?

JARAMILLO: I think that that, along with my good luck, that is the bottom line.

Q: Really?

JARAMILLO: Can you imagine going into the hinterland in some place where you're with campesinos—these rural people that don't have anything, and you're out there in the middle with these people that have nothing in the world; have no home, have nothing —maybe a little shack to keep out of the weather—and they're standing there with the American ambassador in the middle of the field, talking about human rights, their human rights.

Q: Yes. And that they're just as important as your human rights.

JARAMILLO: That's right, that's right. And where would they have gotten it? They got it from Carter; that's where they got it from. So it was a perfect time. I know when I came back I heard things like, “President Carter wasn't a very good president,” and I said, “Listen, I've been out of the country; I don't know what's happened here, but let me tell you, he was wonderful where I was at as a world leader.” Oh, just fabulous, just fabulous.” Because people were saying, “There's dignity to the person, and everybody should be working toward that. “ So that was good.

Q: Do you want to talk a little bit about the other problems in the country? It's such an economically depressed—

JARAMILLO: The biggest problem is the horrible poverty; that's the number one, okay? That undergirds everything. Then that means that there is poor health, that there is poor education, poor housing. Everything is because of the poverty.

And so it's a vicious cycle. What we were trying to do, with small appropriate technology, was work with the people where they were, to help try to stop the mass migrations to the cities where the skill-less peasants get into the city and have nothing. We were trying to

encourage them to stay where they were, because now they had some skills and they had access to simple tools so that they could remain there. The next thing that we were trying to do was to bring in something that would bring in money. You know, the small, cottage-kinds of industries, so that, again, to encourage them to stay there, but with a higher quality of life. The quality of life is so poor, and yet if they move to the city, and they have no job and no place to live, it gets even worse. Then they become displaced people.

So, the problem of poverty, of low education, of poor sanitation—well, it's the third poorest country in Latin America; so you know what that means. I think another problem has been that there's little history of people helping themselves. So that as a consequence, with the turnover of governments that they have had, always by strong-arm, people believe that the government should do these things. And then the government doesn't do it because the government can only get [resources] if people are producing, and if the masses are not producing, then there's no money. I think the masses of the people think the government should do it, and they don't think, “If we worked, and if we paid taxes, and if this happened; that there's all this that needs to take place before we get there.”

Q: It's a massive education program, isn't it?

JARAMILLO: Tremendous.

Q: So you see, you were just right for the job.

JARAMILLO: Oh, listen, for education, it's—and right now, we're not paying attention to education and I can't believe it, because education is going to be the key. If you have education, so that you're going to have good health and some skills and some knowledge, and something about participatory democracy, and then you bring in cottage industries and small industries so that they can earn some money, it's going to turn it around. No one will become a Communist if they're not hungry, if they have a home.

Q: Economics leads politics, doesn't it?

JARAMILLO: Sure, and you cannot raise the economic level of the country if you haven't educated the people; and you can't educate the people if they're hungry; and you can't stifle hunger if the water is dirty. So it's just this vicious cycle. It has to be big infusions of lots of hard work on the part of a lot of people, especially a democracy like us.

Q: Yes.

JARAMILLO: I don't think we're going to get any democracies by force. I think we get democracies by modeling behavior, and I think if we go in and set up democracies, those democracies are doomed for failure. Democracies have to come from grassroots; because they believe in it.

I think another one of the big problems was their slow land agrarian reform; although I must admit that I think one of the reasons why they didn't have the peasant uprisings in large numbers is because at least they had a movement toward it; at least they had built some of these communities where people had houses and something to work on. But that is a problem, again, individuals owning everything. You have somebody owning the mountain and the valley and the stream. “People say, “My God, they're burning the mountains. Don't they know any better?” No. They don't know any better. They're hungry and they don't have any tools. How else do you plant, unless you slash and burn?

Q: Ends up like Haiti.

JARAMILLO: Again, it's a vicious cycle. But I think land reform was needed, faster and more efficient, but they were moving. There was movement there that there wasn't in El Salvador. And I think that makes the difference.

So many years of depending on the single crop to bring in their money from the outside. They have to have a diversified economy. One of the ministers there had been educated in the States and was really trying to diversify their economy. Even if they had to bring in

some of the stuff that they produced before, they need to produce things that would bring in money. I think that needs to be done.

One thing that I think is a problem, but I don't know what to do about it; I'm not enough of an economist to know; and that is the nationalistic tendency that they must control everything. Therefore, sometimes foreign capital doesn't come in in large enough quantities. I don't know how that's taken care of, but I do know if they insist on 51% ownership, then maybe somebody doesn't want to bring in 49, but they would be willing to bring in 51 if they were going to control it, and they [the country] would have gotten 49. And I don't know how that balances out. As I talked to people that were looking to invest, they'd say, “Yes, we want to invest, but they control everything. “ So they were afraid. I don't know how it works out, but I know that I thought that was a problem.

I think problems of all those countries, and Honduras isn't singled out for this, is: one is a brain-drain. If they get educated, they find a way to move some place else. The other one is the money drain. The money that comes to Miami; that money should be put into businesses and bettering things in Honduras. Again, that's a massive problem: If you don't have faith in your government and in your country by putting in your money, then the economy doesn't grow.

Q: You mean, people invested in Miami in U.S. banks?

JARAMILLO: Oh, yes; oh, yes. I know a lot of money was coming to the States. I encouraged a lot that they put money in their own country. The rich have to show faith in their country. Why should the poor have faith in their country if the rich don't? And you model that behavior. I thought that was another of the large problems. Then they have all the small problems that all the rest of us have.

Q: Boy, that's a plateful, isn't it? Did you have many problems with drugs—drug trafficking —when you were there?

JARAMILLO: There were about four or five incidents; and it was very interesting. There were two ugly incidents within the country where they thought that it was because of drug dealings. There had been an awful murder, where they'd buried some people and just an awful kind of thing. I don't remember; it was two or three dead, but it was something—kind of a drug thing. They weren't using drugs in the country, but they had started using Honduran ships. Some Hondurans were willing to rent their ships to carry the drugs, and then the Hondurans would be caught with their flag on a boat that didn't have anything to do with Hondurans—or very little—you know, there'd be a few of them involved. So, that was the one incident where there was the ugly torturing and burying of somebody with a fight; and then the use of two or three boats. Then we had a plane that came in from the United States that landed there that was involved in drugs. And then we had one of the big drugs guys—in fact, every once in a while I read his name in the paper—who was Honduran by birth, but has lived all over, and is into the big Mafia scene. People had pointed out his home to me in Honduras—a beautiful home—and had said, “Now there's a drug person.” Then when there was this other killing and stuff, he disappeared, and they said he had disappeared—I've forgotten where—but there was a connection with that. But he's an individual that is connected.

Q: Moves all over.

JARAMILLO: Yes. I didn't feel at the time that there was the horrible drug problems that you were hearing in other countries, but there was the beginning of it; the beginning of the temptation of making money; making money.

Q: Did you have a narcotics agent there?

JARAMILLO: Yes. And then, we had a group that were in Costa Rica who kept coming. We were able to get that going all the way to Interpol, to really look into the drug situation in large ways. But there was starting to be movement; there was starting to—easy money. But they weren't growing huge fields of this and processing it; not yet. I doubt it. Even less

now; I imagine that with many more Americans probably it would even be worse. But that was—when you heard what stuff was going on in other countries—

Q: Oh, I know; it can be a dreadful, terrible problem. Where did you put most of your emphasis? In the economic section? Political? Commercial? USIS?

JARAMILLO: I would say, if I had to prioritize it—I tried to be all over the place—but if I had to prioritize it, I would say number one was political; number two probably was economic development, because I was trying to get American companies in; number three probably was AID—all the projects—very supportive of the projects and trying to get the funds, and those kinds of things. Probably next would be USIS—doing the kinds of things with English As A Second Language and cultural centers. Those are more the representational as opposed to solid thinking and going after contracts for Americans and that kind of stuff. Probably in that order.

Q: How was your administrative section?

JARAMILLO: I had a good one. I had a good officer, who knew where every penny was, and cared about where the money was. Very few people ever, ever in any way hinted that, “God, he wasn't the greatest.” I was very fortunate because the whole section ran nicely. We had problems there and things taking forever when we'd order something from the States; but he would work at it, and work at it, and try to make sure that he found out what dock they were sitting on now—just great. Good section.

Q: That's good to hear. Did you feel you got enough guidance from the Department? Or did you feel you were on your own running this show?

JARAMILLO: I don't know. When we say “The Department,” that makes it very hard for me to focus, but that there were people within that cared about what I was doing, yes. I don't know if those people just happened—that I met them at the beginning, and so then we established a personal relationship, but I knew there were people that cared about my

work, that cared about me, even at the highest levels. I know that Vance—I got information that he had asked a couple of times. And he told me at my last session with him that if ever I needed him directly, to use a back channel immediately. I had that feeling that he cared about me as a human being, and I wasn't just one of thousands, but that there was somebody who cared. It's very difficult for me to toot my horn, talking about myself like this drives me nuts.

Q: Yes. I can imagine.

JARAMILLO: I knew no one to tell, “I'm doing okay,” or “I'm not doing okay. It was my people in the embassy that told their counterparts; the word got out, and by the time I'd get to the State Department, they'd say, “Hey, I hear you're really doing a terrific job.” And I'd say, “Well, I'm glad to hear that. Who told you that?” It was the officers that were sending out word to their colleagues, like probably the economic officer told the other one, “We lucked out. We got one that can read.” [Laughs] I felt that they were doing that, and so because of their connections, too, there were other people that were interested. In the State Department, I always felt that somebody cared about us in the different sections.

Q: And you felt you got enough guidance?

JARAMILLO: Yes.

Q: You had a good desk officer, did you?

JARAMILLO: Yes.

Q: Did you have very many people coming through? Any CODELs? VIPS?

JARAMILLO: At the beginning of the time, I was told that a Congressman hadn't been there in I don't know how many years, and I wouldn't have to worry about that. Well, we hadn't been—what—two months when Congressman Long came in. And remember, Long is the one that used to really be high into the technology, the agrarian reform and stuff.

And then we had DeConcini from Arizona. Then we had all the big wheels from the Latin Division in the State Department: the Assistant Secretary.

Q: You did?

JARAMILLO: Oh, yes. We had—Bushnell was one. Oh, I'm forgetting all these people's names.

Q: Assistant Secretary for Latin American Affairs?

JARAMILLO: Yes. Oh, I'm blocking out names, but one of them that had preceded Bushnell. I guess he must have gone there three or four times. See, Central America was starting to heat up and so they would go over there more.

Q: And the Carter Administration was giving more weight to what went on there.

JARAMILLO: Oh, yes.

Q: It had been sort of ignored. The lost continent.

JARAMILLO: Oh, yes. Very obvious. That is how come a woman sneaked in there. [Laughter] Please notice they haven't taken one since. That's how this one had sneaked in; they hadn't been paying attention to it.

Q: What about consular problems? Did you have many consular problems?

JARAMILLO: Yes. If there was one area that I would say causes problems for the United States, it's the consular section; not because you don't have highly qualified people and just hard workers, but it's the way it's set up. The system is set up to discriminate against the poor.

Q: Is that so?

JARAMILLO: Only the rich can come to this country; only the ones that have had access to English; only the ones that can show that they've had money in their savings account for many, many years. So then it sets up this dichotomy that our officers are caught. You never say, “You're too poor to go,” but that's what it really boils down to; and those people aren't stupid. It's set up to get people to cheat and to say, “Oh, yes. I'm coming back,” and then they don't come back.

Our officers are told over and over, they've got to do everything they can to make sure that they screen everybody, so a lot of times it comes out as terrible rudeness. This might be fine other places. I don't know some of the other world cultures, but I know that in Latin America, it comes out very, very rude. I always thought I would have loved to have had some time; that I wasn't so busy to be out there and see if there is a way that you can tell people “no” in a consular section without offending. Because that was the area where I had to spend the most time of settling people down that were very upset. Somebody's cousin had just been told “No,” and this, and this, and this. So the Ambassador had to spend a lot of time healing wounds that had been caused there, and I do not believe that it was the personnel; it's the way the system is set up. I don't know of a better system, but that's the fact. So, consular problems I had—yes.

My sister and brother-in-law went down to visit me, and when they were coming back—they had just had these marvelous two weeks, getting to know everybody. They got on the plane, and they told the people who they were and what they had been doing there, and immediately, they said, “Oh, but she has this terrible consular officer,” and they started in on the section. I think it's so unfair to our officers. So that was another one of those areas like the evaluation; that I thought that if I get to stay longer, I'd like to help people think this through.

Q: It's the laws that are in effect.

JARAMILLO: Right, right. It's the law, and they can't do anything about it. How do you do anything different? My feeling was that consular officers should get shorter periods of times at posts, with the same training they now have, but shorter periods, because I think it's a highly stressful job. Maybe even moving from one place to the other, even if that's all they do, but keep moving them, so at least they don't get the reputation of being the hateful one.

Q: Yes, and they don't keep getting the same faces in front of them.

JARAMILLO: That's right; right. I also thought that if there was going to be any differential in pay, probably consular officers who have such a high-stress position, not only would they be moved around a lot, but they'd get paid a little bit more, too.

Q: That would be a novelty.

JARAMILLO: Oh, my goodness, those people are out there in the front line. You know, if there's such pressure on them, then they create problems for us. Then we have to go and spend all this time healing those wounds. If they were paid a little more and didn't have to stay so long, and got that extra training, to take the little extra time, that they're not so [abrupt]. I think it would help; it could help. See, a lot of people tried to tell me, “You only have to worry about the ones that make decisions. You don't have to worry about the masses.” Masses are important for relationships between people, and masses pressure leaders. Look in this country what's happening right now: I've heard a couple of people tell me lately, “You know, that Gorbachev; I'm starting to think that maybe he tells the truth. “ You know what they're saying. My God! It's that masses do affect; they are going to make a difference. I think if we had masses of friends all over the world, leaders would act differently. So that was one of my problems that we worked very hard at.

Q: You are familiar, are you not, with the fact that, historically, consular officers are considered within the Service and are treated within the Service, up until the advent of Barbara Watson, as second-class people?

JARAMILLO: Yes.

Q: Did you see much of that?

JARAMILLO: No, I didn't. See, I came in when Barbara Watson was there, okay? So, I didn't.

Q: But within your embassy, you didn't feel there was hierarchy with the political people at the top?

JARAMILLO: No, but I did feel that there was a hierarchy with AID not belonging to the embassy, which just drove me insane.

Q: What about USIS? Did you see anything?

JARAMILLO: Yes, you sort of had the feeling that, “Yes, they probably quite don't have the credentials.”

Q: You mean that's the feeling among—

JARAMILLO: Yes. Nobody said anything; you picked it up in vibes. And, again, they're out there in the forefront. And if they don't know what's going on, they can really flub it for you. I really felt that every single unit was crucial, and that it had to work together as a team.

I know that people tried to, I'm sure, hint about hierarchy; but when they saw that I wasn't very interested in that, I think that's probably why it wasn't made an issue. I'm sure that if they had found responses, that I would have gotten more information. I was trying to say, “Look, here we work as a team.” But I never had problems with USIS. They were just

marvelous people. I had a wonderful relationship with the local media out there all the time. The biggest problem that I had was with the consular office, and it was because they have to deny visas right and left; and we know they have to. Q: Yes, and you have such masses in Latin American posts, too. I mean, the workload down there is terrible.

JARAMILLO: The lines! You could see that if you were human you were going to get short, and the minute you lose your temper, there goes—well, it becomes an international incident.

Q: Did you have any incidences of people within your embassy—troubles either with alcoholism or nervous breakdowns? Out of that many people, it seems as though you would have some.

JARAMILLO: I don't recall any.

Q: That is very good news, because, as you said, the stresses are very great, and it is a hardship post.

JARAMILLO: Oh, yes. I'm going to put that in my little list to think about, in case that I would remember that.

Q: In line with this same sort of general subject, did you not feel any rivalries between the various sections?

JARAMILLO: I think that there was, and I think that my way of dealing with it, and being so up-front about “We're all in this together and we all put our foot forward,” I think that that didn't let it get out of hand. I also think since they had been having so much trouble in the embassy—

Q: Of this sort of thing?

JARAMILLO: I imagine that that's what was happening, because they just kept telling me, “They need you to get down there. There are a lot of problems within the embassy.” They weren't specific what the problems were.

Q: Yes.

JARAMILLO: And saw that I came in and got people to talk to each other and we do things together, and they probably decided, “Leave well enough alone. “ But I did hear hints of the hierarchy, again, you know.

Q: It can be very destructive of the American effort overseas when—

JARAMILLO: Oh, when they start—

Q: In-fighting.

JARAMILLO: Yes, the in-fighting; that I could really sense who they thought was important. And, “Oh, well, it's just that.” Enough was dropped of that that I caught on. But, you know, the good diplomat; pretend that you didn't catch on, and then make sure that you get those people—Q: Be more diplomatic than the career diplomats. [Laughter]

JARAMILLO: There you go. And then you make sure that you sit them together at a country team meeting, or whatever. You do lots of these other things to get people to know each other as human beings, and then as professionals, and then it's not so important to know that you happen to have chosen that one and I chose this one.

Q: They take different skills.

JARAMILLO: That's right; that's right.

Q: And, of course, if you valued them all and showed that you did—

JARAMILLO: Right.

Q: It would certainly make a big difference.

JARAMILLO: And see, the other thing, maybe if I had come from one of those sections; maybe if I had been an economist, I would have favored the economist. Or maybe if I had been a business person, the commercial attach#. Maybe if I had a military background . . . But, see, I came from none of their professions. I came in as a professional educator with a Ph.D. in Latin American relations. And I didn't side in with any single one of them because I didn't know more about one than I did the other; I was learning about them across the board, and I think that helped.

Q: I see, yes. In the official entertainment, you indicated previously that you, on a rotating basis, had all of your officers at some time—well, not only all your officers; I suppose all of your staff—to the residence at sometime.

JARAMILLO: Oh, yes. I had—and I also had just staff parties. For example, Fred [Rondon] just wrote to me the other day, and he said, “I used your idea because I thought that was fun.” I had a party that I said, “Come to my shack.” And that was all the party. I had set it up all over the gardens and everything, where it was all completely on your own. You could go to the pool and swim and do that, or you could go inside the house and play records and dance here, or you could go to the barbecue and fix things in the barbecue pit. You could do whatever you wanted to, and it was just for Americans. And, oh, that was a fun party, just a fun party. Then I did the traditional ones, like we did a dancing party and only Americans. I don't remember how many I had for just Americans; and they were really pleased with that because, evidently, because there's no entertainment money in that, ambassadors don't do as much of that. They always have to include the Hondurans in order for them to justify how they're going to spend the money. So they were very pleased, knowing that I didn't come from a rich background, that I was willing to have parties just for them.

Q: Also I was impressed by what you said about your pool.

JARAMILLO: Yes, yes. It was open for the Peace Corps volunteers that came into town, too.

Q: Was it?

JARAMILLO: Oh, they loved that. That was heaven. They would have been out, you know, for months in some little dusty place where they barely had enough water to take a bath. And then to come in and sit around the pool and the gardens, they loved that. So, that was open for them. Then the official entertainment—I tried to include junior officers, and I tried to rotate people so that staff got to come occasionally, so that everybody would feel welcome to the residence. If we had stand-up parties, the Peace Corps office could invite two people, always, to come in. Normally the ones that had come from far away would get to come in. It would be a stand-up party, where nothing was being exchanged; no confidential information and stuff. One day, two young Peace Corps women had come in and I was introducing them around, and introduced them to the president; I was taking them all over. People started to leave and these women, I'd watch them, and they'd kind of follow me around, and I had the feeling that they wanted to say something, but I didn't know; there was something funny going on. Finally, one came up and she said, “Madam Ambassador, could we talk to you for just a minute?” “Sure. “ So I wandered over to the corner with them.

One said, “We want to tell you something. We've got to tell you this before we leave and we don't know how to tell you.” She said to the other one, “You tell her.” And the other said, “No, you tell her.” And I thought: Oh, God! What Is going on? You know, I thought, “My slip's been showing all evening.” [Laughs) And she said, “We want you to know that before we came here tonight, we'd said, 'Yeah, yeah. The American ambassador has invited us. I betcha we get in there, we sit in some corner and nobody pays any attention to us.' We want you to know that tonight we're going away with the feeling we were center

to the whole thing." And they got into it, and oh my God! I was just—I was choking back the tears like I am right now, and there I was, trying to be this very efficient hostess," Everybody that comes to my house is very welcome," and da-da-da. And then I said, "Sweetheart, I don't blame you for thinking that. If I'd been in your shoes, I would have thought that, too. I'm so glad that you found out that I really do mean it when I say . . ." They said that they could not, in good conscience, leave because they had bad-mouthed me so badly that I wasn't going to pay any attention to them, and then I had taken them to meet the president and had just introduced them to everybody, and praised them for their work. I did that because I thought that if the government people understood what tremendous work our Peace Corps were doing, they'd get more support.

Q: Yes.

JARAMILLO: Whenever I went into a small community, ahead had been sent the message: the Peace Corps person is to be there to meet me with whoever was going to meet me, and that gave that Peace Corps person stature like it wouldn't quit; because he had to be there with the mayor, the—you know, she has said that she wants to meet him. We'd sit at the lunches or the dinners and I'd insist that they sit with me, and so that gave them visibility in the community, that their work was valued. I always had learned what they were doing, and who was their counterpart, and they were being supportive; and so I always was able to personalize everything.

Q: Yes, yes. Now we're getting down to Foreign Service Inspectors. Did they come through while you were there?

JARAMILLO: I suppose they did; I don't remember.

Q: Well, obviously, it wasn't a trauma.

JARAMILLO: [Laughing] No. If they did, it wasn't a trauma. Surely, they were there. I was there three years. I don't remember. They must have been there.

Q: They had come through just shortly before you came there.

JARAMILLO: Well, maybe they hadn't.

Q: I really asked the question to see if it was a trauma, and obviously, this was not a trauma.

JARAMILLO: No, we didn't have traumas.

Q: If they did come, then they treated you in a way you felt was fair, and so forth. Did you make the effort to train your young officers—the ones that were coming out—to make certain that they got the writing skills and, you know, on-the-job training?

JARAMILLO: I don't think I, directly, as much as getting Fred to help them.

Q: You did? In other words, that was his bailiwick?

JARAMILLO: Yes.

Q: But you did approve that?

JARAMILLO: Oh, yes; oh, yes. I just thought it was important— I'm a great career development woman, and I think that's the only way you move up. I've been so fortunate in other people helping me, that I'm very conscious of it. But I didn't do it directly. I also encouraged, in team meetings, in the country team meetings, the directors, for them to help their officers. So it was done in that way, too. I think it was covered, but not in a formal way.

Q: Yes, yes. What about this item here: Major Successes and how being a woman contributed to them?"

JARAMILLO: Major successes?

Q: Was it because you were a woman, or just because you were such a skillful educator, and also Hispanic, and knowing both cultures? In other words, did any of your success, do you think, stem from your gender? One thing you said, about how Latin Americans stand back and let the woman talk first; maybe that would be an in?

JARAMILLO: Yes. Just being a woman was an advantage; it wasn't a disadvantage. It was an advantage. Look, in the diplomatic corps, you remember how all the ambassadors stand by—in the reception line—by how long they've been in the country?

Q: Yes.

JARAMILLO: So you come in, and you're way at the back, right? Okay, I'm the American; I just arrived; so Brazil and I are at the tail end. I'd been there a couple of months—do you know that those ambassadors keep pushing you? Pushing me? They'd turn back and then, “Oh, no, no, no, Ms. Ambassador.” They'd stick me in front of them, and I'd say, “You're breaking all protocol.” “The heck with protocol.” They wanted me to be in the front of the line. That happened so many times. I'd always go to the back and stand in my place, and I was so correct. It was just a neat thing, and that was because I was a woman.

I think if I had successes, they were a combination of things. It was because, as a woman, you have special skills; because, as a minority person, growing up where there's a major culture, you pick up skills; because I, myself, am a people-person; because I had the skills and knowledge of a professional; and because I am an educator and have dealt with masses of different people in trying to convince them that the way I see the world is the right way to look at the world; and that's what a teacher does. And so then you take those skills and you package them to fit the occasion, and you're off. It's a combination. I don't think that just being a woman, or just being an Hispanic, or just being a minority, or just an educator, but when you combine those—boy, I was at the right place at the right time.

Q: You certainly were. Did you feel when you left that you left anything unresolved?

JARAMILLO: I really felt that we had come to closure on all our major goals.

Q: Is that so? Well, that's wonderful. Let's move along to personal items such as the details of entertaining and running a residence. For example, as a woman without a "wife," were you not entitled to have a housekeeper? And did you, indeed, have one?

JARAMILLO: Well, it was very interesting because I had heard of some men that were there that had someone to run the residence because they didn't have a wife. They had just started it. Now I guess bachelors or divorced people—they were just starting to let them be ambassadors. I had heard of that so I tried, at the beginning when I went, to hire a young Honduran lady to supervise the staff, because I realized it was going to be terribly hard for my husband, who hadn't done any of that stuff before, to try to do it. He was going to be in charge of supervising the buying of the liquors and what was needed; he was going to do all that. I hired a Honduran woman who was up high in the Honduran society and so knew what Hondurans that would be dealing with the embassy would like, and what they'd expect and all. I don't know how long she worked. Maybe she worked six months or so. It was the perfect thing for her to work because she allowed me to spend all my time on embassy matters and not have to pay any attention to the residence. Although I paid attention to it because my virtue—I'm the kind that has to straighten out rugs and put flowers—that's me, but I didn't have to worry that the food wasn't served attractively. What she would do was prepare menus and she'd prepare guest lists, and lots of that stuff, then she and I would sit and go through it. Then I would take my lists and the protocol officer would look at it, so it had three people looking at it. I think that we made few mistakes because so many people were looking at it.

When she decided that she didn't want to do that anymore—she had thought that I was hiring her so that she could be my representative, and I started noticing that she would be fabulously dressed. All of a sudden, I realized how it was developing. Then when she said she thought she'd done her service—and we were real good friends—I just took her up on

it, and then I didn't have anyone. But I think it was perfect because it took us through that initial period.

Looking back on it now, I think that I could advise every woman ambassador to immediately hire someone and I would suggest they would hire someone from the Americans. See, we couldn't do that. Remember, when I was there, we couldn't hire wives for that. And I would say that it would be a permanent position and the ambassador could then work with it if they wanted them full-time or only on call, whatever they thought was best. But I do think that a woman should not have to worry at all about how the table's going to look or if they serve the right thing. My husband was just wonderful staying on top of every little detail, trying to make sure that the staff—the staff was trained and had done it for many years, but there's still a lot of slips. I don't ever remember a major catastrophe, maybe a little too much liquor in something they were going to flame, but not bad; not bad.

Q: Did your husband then actually make certain the table was set properly? Did he get down to that detail?

JARAMILLO: The first six months, the woman was doing it and training the staff to be sure, and then by the time she went, I had such a wonderful relationship with the staff that they were going a mile to please me because I had told them that if I wasn't successful at both the job and the home, I couldn't be there, and that I had to spend all my energies in the office. So they knew it. My husband helped a lot. Yes, he checked things.

Q: Who bought the food?

JARAMILLO: A combination. My husband would go with the cook and they would buy it. I never went to buy anything, ever, related to food or liquor; never. My husband and the cook would prepare the lists. When I had the woman there she was helping with the menus. Of course, from there we were getting the grocery lists. My husband would supervise the putting of the stuff, the cellar of the liquor. You see, my husband did all of that. And as a Latino man, he had never done any of that, but he was just so willing to help

out. We took all kinds of etiquette books, and they'd be paging through. When we were going to do something brand-new, they'd be paging through it. It was real good for him, too, because he learned so much about “women's work” that he would have never known any other way.

Q: And developed a sensitivity, I'm sure.

JARAMILLO: Oh, yes.

Q: Your Relationships with these-

JARAMILLO: Secretaries__I already told you about. Women Officers—we had a few and we were great friends. And the Wives—we were all friends. We became a closely-knit community—just really beautiful.

Q: You may find way down the road that you were somebody's role model among the women officers. Did you have very many of them there?

JARAMILLO: Let's see. We had several in AID, a couple in USIS, several in the consular section, a couple in administration. We didn't in the commercial section. We didn't in the political section, and that's the one I wanted, because that's where I was really shining and I would have loved to have been there. [laughs]

Q: The list you've just given me proves the validity of what we were talking about earlier. There were no political ones, no commercial, no economic officers.

JARAMILLO: I think we had one economic officer that came in sometime during my stay there.

Q: And they were all in what are considered at the Department as “safe” jobs for women—AID, USIS, consular, admin.

JARAMILLO: Yes. [Referring to a topic] Entertainment: Christmas/Thanksgiving—I did kind of the traditional things. For Thanksgiving, I didn't do much because I was always invited. One of the American families would invite me real early to go have dinner with them as part of their family.

Q: A non-embassy person, you mean?

JARAMILLO: No, an embassy person. An embassy family would always invite me; and they'd invite me real early—like July. “Put it down. You're going to have Thanksgiving dinner with us.” And so I didn't have a Thanksgiving dinner for the embassy. But for Christmas, we had the party, a Christmas party, and especially for the children; a big Christmas party for the American children. Fourth of July entertainment, we had the big kind of noon-type of entertainment.

Q: Reception for all the diplomats?

JARAMILLO: Yes. Kind of—almost reception/luncheon kind of a brunch kind of thing, with some goodies to eat and lots of champagne. I really tried to do it nice because the other embassies make such a to-do about their national days, with sit-down dinners and all this stuff.

Q: But you must have hundreds of people.

JARAMILLO: I had to invite too many people, so you can't do that. See again, I'm very careful with money. The background that I shared this morning, would show you that. So we would find all kinds of neat ways of just stretching the money.

Q: Did the wives help out?

JARAMILLO: Yes, oh, yes. The wives helped me as much as—all I needed to do was say, “Would you help me?” And it was at a time when wives were starting to resent that they

always had to help. That was going through the embassy at the time, so I had to be very careful of not asking. If they offered, I took them up on it. Up to then, they used to tell me that they were treated like: “The Ambassador's wife says you have to do that. You've got to bring this much. And you've gotta—” I couldn't believe it, all the stories that they would tell me.

Q: Did they volunteer to bring things?

JARAMILLO: Yes.

Q: Good. Did Marian [Rondon, wife of the DCM] sort of fill in there, with the wives? That is, sort of bringing them together?

JARAMILLO: You know, Marian helped me—how was it specifically? All the wives of the diplomatic corps had an organization that they went to. And I asked Marian. I said, “Marian, I know you don't want to do it, but you have to help me. You just have to save me.”And she said, “What is it?” “Would you go to these meetings?” I said. “I can't stand it. I just feel to give up two or three hours to just sit around and talk . . .” So she did it for me. Marian was wonderful with me, helping me out in ways like that. Now I know she didn't like it, but she helped me out.

Q: Another thing I'm curious about: at dinners at the other embassies, was there any problem over where to seat your husband? That has been a problem in various embassies around the world.

JARAMILLO: It was so neat. They must have given him ambassadorial rank because everywhere we went he was always made the center of attention. I think that that was the way of the Latins showing him that he wasn't a lesser person, especially that he was the male. This is the way we got our invitations: from the American community, we got “Ambassador and Dr. Jaramillo.” From the diplomatic corps and from the Hondurans, we got two separate invitations.

Q: Oh, really?

JARAMILLO: Dr. Jaramillo, one; and Ambassador Jaramillo, the other. That way my name didn't have to be in front of his.

Q: Isn't that fascinating.

JARAMILLO: So you see, there's a way around everything if there's a will. That way he was not an appendage. He had his own invitation. Now, as you know, there's so many stag affairs and I went to many, many stag affairs where I was the only woman with all the men. Once in while, there was a charg# if one of the ambassadors was out, and usually the second one was a woman from the Latin countries. But for a lot of the stag affairs, they invited my husband.

Q: Did they?

JARAMILLO: Yes. With a special invitation. That was an accommodation for the male that they were doing for each other.

Q: Would he be seated at the right of the hostess, if you were at the right of the host?

JARAMILLO: Sometimes. I guess it depended if there was another high ranking ambassador in; then probably not. He'd be sitting someplace else. But I guess with some ambassadors, that they felt maybe weren't as important, I don't know. Or we would be invited to where only the ambassador that was invited was us and all the rest would be non-diplomatic people, and then he was always seated to the right.

Q: That's very interesting. So it just worked its way out.

JARAMILLO: Yes. Now I don't know if that can only be worked out in Latin America. I don't know how that works out in Europe.

Q: Well, some people have had a lot of difficulty with that, like Patricia Harris. They had to have an actual "Harris Ruling" on this as to how he would be treated.

JARAMILLO: The other thing is that Heri was always called "Dr. Jaramillo," very formally, very formally.

Q: He always had his title. On the 4th of July, did you have the one big event and then after that everybody was free to go his own way?

JARAMILLO: I think, if I remember correctly, we had the big event and that was the thing at noon, and then after noon, the American families would go to one of the parks. We'd go to Aurora Park and we'd have our quote, "4th of July" celebration, complete with games and all the children.

Q: And the hot dogs and so forth.

JARAMILLO: I don't remember if we did it on the same day, Ann, or if we took two different days to do it. I don't remember, but we had the two things. One was the formal one and one was ours.

Q: And one was yours, yes. Did you have time—well, you don't like sports anyway; so you didn't, and for recreation you didn't have time.

JARAMILLO: Oh, let me tell you, yes. I'm not a recreation person. I'm a confirmed workaholic, and I've been that since a child, and I don't think I'll change now. So, for recreation I don't do much. I love to dance, so everywhere we went that there was music, we danced. They loved it that we knew how to do all the Latin dances, so we were very popular on that. We were invited a lot to dancing parties. Sports—I know nothing about sports, but I knew soccer was very important, so I went to soccer games and I learned what team who liked and I learned scores. I would go to the soccer games and talk soccer, because I thought that was very important. Because it's the national sport and because a

lot of information is exchanged at those places. The president—if I was going to go to the soccer—the President of the country always invited me to sit with him in his box.

[Referring to topics] I've already told you about my Travel Inside the Country. I've been all over, and then some. Speaking Engagements—Oh, I was asked to speak everywhere, everywhere. Kiwanis, Lions, the equivalent of twenty-thirty—what is it? The Young Professionals, church groups, schools, businesses, universities. I mean, the invitations just came right in.

Q: Poured in, yes.

JARAMILLO: We just accepted as many as I possibly could, and in addition always suggested, “Could one of my officers substitute for me if I couldn't go?” It was just constant. I thought it was very important because you can make another pitch. And I was working 24 hours a day, so that was a good way to get it going. The other thing is that I picked up a habit that now I can't break, and it's killing me; and that is, that I wrote everything that I was going to speak. I didn't speak off-the-cuff because I was terribly afraid that somebody would misquote me and there was no way of going back. So I learned, even for a welcoming speech, to write it on a card, and I would read it. And that is playing havoc with my life today, because I continue to do that, and I just can't let go of it; that I can get up and just talk all over the place. It stayed with me that the opportunity for being misquoted is great. “But you said this.” And it's very important what you say, because it's at those public places where you drop hints of policy. And so that I took very, very seriously.

Travel Abroad—I wanted to go to Guatemala so badly. I've been to Guatemala many, many times and I just love the country and I wanted to buy some things. Twice I'd gotten permission from Washington to go and, twice, something was happening in our neck of the woods that I made my own decision that I wouldn't go. I wasn't told by Washington that I couldn't. I already had the permission, but something was happening. I don't remember

the particulars, but I wasn't able to go. I went with the ambassador from El Salvador, Frank Devine; we went to Panama and we got our briefing together, and a tour of Panama.

Q: This would be at the time of the Panama Canal issue?

JARAMILLO: All of us, all of the American ambassadors met in Costa Rica twice. So there was mixing. I came back to the States, oh, I suppose four or five times during the three years. I came up because I developed a cyst in one of my breasts, and I had to come up, kind of an emergency. The doctor saw it and she said I had to come right away. And so I came and had it aspirated and back I went. I came twice to buy clothes. Oh, did I buy clothes!

Q: Did you really?

JARAMILLO: Yes, and I've never been much of a clotheshorse. And I really—when you're that much in the public eye, you just have to have something different. That's just all there is to it. And, besides, dresses came back into fashion, and I love dresses. I was happy again. I didn't get to do any other traveling. We came once on vacation; once with the president. A couple of times I got invited to go to Washington and do something, and a couple of trips to just Miami or New Orleans for clothes. That was the extent of the travel abroad at that time. Since then, before and after, I've traveled like crazy.

Q: What about the time you came? Didn't you bring President Paz to the United States? We haven't talked about that. Do you want to tell me about that? How did that come about?

JARAMILLO: Well, I wanted the president to talk to our president. I just thought it was very important. People thought—when I say people, I'm just not giving names, but there were important people that thought Honduras was at very bottom of the list and our president shouldn't be bothered. My feeling was that Honduras was going to become very important to the United States, and I now think, boy, my crystal ball was really working.

Q: Yes, it certainly was.

JARAMILLO: I kept thinking if even 15 minutes, you know, the glory of sitting with the president and talking about democracy, that that would be very important. I knew that Paz was really sticking his head out by going the democracy route and spreading power. So I wanted that. I was pushing for that. I knew indirectly—I was hearing, “Honduras isn't important, so we wouldn't have to do that.” But I insisted, and insisted, and insisted. And, of course, he wanted to go so badly, so that finally we got—oh, I know—he was going to come to the States because he was having a helicopter prepared by General Haig's company. General Haig was the president of the Sikorsky Helicopter Company. We were going—I guess it was to White Plains, New York, to see where his helicopter was, and he wanted to meet with General Haig. The plane was at the point where they had said he could come up to see it. So he was going to be in the States anyway. And then there was a big Honduran-American thing in New Orleans, and he had been asked to address it. So that was economic development. Then they worked in a visit to see the president. That was really exciting because he spoke to the Council of Foreign Relations in New York, and we took a plane ride over West Point and showed him a lot of stuff and then we went to the Sikorsky Air Factory to see all that. Then we went to Washington and got to sit in that room where—what do they call it? Is that the East Room where they sit for the cameras? And the president and I got to sit—

Q: Oh, the Oval Office?

JARAMILLO: No, the East Room—to sit on each side of the president because Jimmy Carter needed a translator, so I got to sit next to him instead of the official translator. That was neat. Somebody else sat near Paz, so it was just real nice; the fanfare quite of going to Washington with the sirens and all that.

Q: And the flags out on every corner.

JARAMILLO: That's right. That's right.

Q: Because it was an official visit then?

JARAMILLO: Yes.

Q: He brought an entourage with him?

JARAMILLO: Oh, yes. It was a large group of people. We came in one of those Lear Jets. Seats maybe eight or twelve people.

Q: Many of these items—this is an omnibus collection of questions—don't apply to you, such as the loneliness of being chief of mission. What about the Impact of Power? You had had big jobs before, but you hadn't had sirens and flags.

JARAMILLO: Right. It was a time where you really did a lot of reflection, and I had to tell myself, “Okay, Mari-Luci, keep your feet firmly on the ground. You're a university professor. Somewhere from the high heavens this has fallen into your lap. Maybe tomorrow you'll go back.” And I worked under the assumption that maybe tomorrow I'd be called back, so I had to do my best work today. But power didn't go to my head. I saw the access to power that that position has. It is a miniature presidency. You can do what you want to; you can order people around; you can do whatever you please. Within 24 hours, you can get rid of people without even having to justify it. The power is awesome. I often thought about it. That power in wrong hands is uncontrolled power.

Q: Yes.

JARAMILLO: The people that it goes to their head, that “Now I'm a very important person,” could really misuse that power. For me, I guess, it made me very aware that that power was very temporary, and that it was to be used for the benefit of my country. That it wasn't a God-given power or a personal power that I had because I was superior. That power

went with the office and was to be used only if needed. I did a lot of thinking about it, and lots of thinking in the abuses of it, and understanding why people abuse power when it's handed to them without any kind of criteria of how it's to be used. If there's something in your personality that you need that, it can really get silly. My self-image: I think that I'm an introvert, and a lot of people don't realize that because I'm always out in the public eye. But I really am an introvert and I think it helped me a little, constantly being in the public eye. When you're in the classroom at the university, you're a ham up there for that particular audience, and I guess what I had to learn was, become that person that I was in the classroom all the time.

Q: It's almost a goldfish-bowl existence, isn't it?

JARAMILLO: Yes, oh, yes. I always [used to] put my own rollers on my head, but I was very conscious that I couldn't step out of my house because there might be camera some place through the fence, so I would always have to go to the beauty shop and get my hair done. You know, those things; because it really was a fish- bowl. I think it improved my self image. I think I never internalized the work that I was doing, or the position, until after I left it. That's when it really hit me. I represented the president of this country and I did everything I was asked to do and I didn't make a single enemy. Gosh! I really felt good. But it was after it was all over. During that time, I lived on a day-to-day basis. I had heard so many horror stories about people—that they were supposed to leave and didn't want to leave.

Q: Yes.

JARAMILLO: Oh, just on, and on, and on. I'd think, oh, I don't want to become one of those. I'd always tell Heri, “We're ready. Today's the last day.” Because we had thought that they'd probably leave us there a year, and when they left us there three years, we turned out to be one of the couples that had been there the longest in the diplomatic corps. We couldn't believe it, because Americans are usually changed around so much. Okay,

[topic] Opportunities for a private life—I've told you all about my husband's role. I told you about my cyst and that I had to come out.

Q: You were able to have a private life, though, with your husband?

JARAMILLO: Yes, yes. Well, a private life—Sundays we would try to be very jealous of—maybe we'd have lunch on Sunday with somebody and then after lunch, that was kind of a private time. We hardly ever went out on Sunday night. The rest of the time it was nearly every night; it was either at our house or out. But on Sunday nights, I always told Heri that Sundays were family days for the Americans that had families, and for us, we could use it as rest time, and so Sunday nights we usually just kind of walked in the gardens or did something like that. I read a lot.

Q: All this entertaining night after night after night. You didn't find it got wearing?

JARAMILLO: No, because I was so interested in the politics of the thing. You know, it was always that I took another goody home. [Laughter]

Q: Sure, sure. You wrote your own cables?

JARAMILLO: I did a lot of that, and then, when Fred joined us, we became a team. We helped each other with the drafting of cables. I had lots of information that I was able to send to Washington. Many a time I would get a call to see if I knew what was happening in the area.

Q: You knew. Yes.

JARAMILLO: It was just—a very exciting time. And the thing is, I haven't been able to talk to anybody about this. You're the first person that I have talked to about this.

Q: Is that so?

JARAMILLO: Yes. I just told myself, “People want to know this and that.” And I feel that it's too raw down there to be talking about the kinds of things that I knew and what was going on, and who did what to whom. Every time I see a name in the paper, I know them; I've spoken with them; I've been with them, and so I just decided not to talk about it. My cables are—most of my cables are 20 years; so that means that—let's see, I went in 1977—[in] '97, a lot of those cables are going to be public property then. I feel that at that time, the stuff that I saw and did and heard won't hurt any living human beings. I think that's the way to behave. I know I could have come back and said, “Oh! They didn't know it; I did.” But I don't want to.

Q: And written the book that—

JARAMILLO: Right, and I don't want to. I just feel I was given a job to do for my country and I did it. One of the stipulations was that we didn't talk about it, and I think that stays till now. That's why I said that, “I don't think I'm going to tell you this.”

Q: Absolutely right. Were you able to discuss these things with your husband?

JARAMILLO: No.

Q: You couldn't even talk to your husband?

JARAMILLO: I decided not to. My husband sometimes says, “When we were in Honduras, you used to tell me, “When we get home I'll tell you. And you haven't told me anything.” I said, “Honey, it's too late. Some of that stuff has already left my head.” But I decided not to, so that my husband could never, never be asked any information. He didn't have to be up tight. He was himself because he didn't know any of the specifics. What he knew was what others talked about.

Q: You were very good to keep that all to yourself.

JARAMILLO: I told him, I said, “Honey, there's going to be some things. Please don't ask me. I've already got an “in” to some things, but please don't ask me; because if you know about it, then two things: (1) you will worry; and (2) you won't be free. Then you have to be watching what you say, what you ask.” And I said, “It's hard. I have to be so careful, pretend I don't know and listen for two hours to something that I know and that kind of stuff, and you don't have to put up with that. “

Q: You have always been a very open person?

JARAMILLO: Right. Q: So you really had to learn a new skill, didn't you?

JARAMILLO: It was brand-new. I had shared everything. I'm an open book. I share everything with everybody. My favorite word is “share.” For me, to know all these things and not tell my husband was something else.

Q: That's where it was a good thing that you had such a tremendous rapport with Fred, because he [had] the clearances—

JARAMILLO: Oh, yes, he and I were in it together.

Q: What about the personal dangers?

JARAMILLO: There [were] two “threats” made to my life; one came out of Guatemala, and supposedly some people overheard that “they were going to get me.” Probably kidnap me. The embassy in Guatemala got very, very upset and they wrote cables for me to be very careful. I only had a guard; I didn't have an armored car—you know, all that stuff that they put on the cars later on.

Q: You didn't have an armored car?

JARAMILLO: No. It was just the regular car, and then they armored it. That's when they put in that heavy glass and all that stuff. But, no, at the beginning I didn't. And so, for a

while, I was given special protection from the Honduran Government. There were cars that went in front and behind us. I disliked it intensely because I thought that the more attention you called the worse things got, and we weren't in the problems that we have now. I also knew that I was very safe in Honduras, because I knew I had Paz' assurance that nobody would ever get to me. I knew, on my own, that I had a lot more protection than some people thought I did. The security officer came up from Panama and they did all this stuff. There was no way that I could take another route. To live on the hill, you have to come down the same hill. I kept saying, “Listen . . .” I guess around that time is when they put the armor into the car and all that. But I never felt threatened. People would tell me not to walk into the crowds. If ever you were to see the films there, I was in the middle of crowds everywhere. I wasn't afraid.

Q: Did you call off the Honduran cars?

JARAMILLO: Yes. I kept telling the Americans, “Take them off, take them off. “ But we waited until the security officer from Panama gave the clearance. But, oh, I didn't like that at all. Then another one was that I got threatening letters from some place in Chicago. From an American in Chicago, that he was going to kill me. Those letters—I don't remember how many we got—were sent back to the State Department, and the person that was writing the letters was to be checked out. I asked—hinted—that I didn't want to know any of the details, because I thought I was very free person, roaming around, giving all these lectures before I left, and I wanted to pursue that career when I came back. I just didn't want to know the details. I don't know if the man was off his rocker, or what happened, but it stopped, and I have no idea if it was because somebody checked into it, or they just ignored it. I have no idea. But that was the only thing.

Q: The FBI would get after that.

JARAMILLO: Oh, yes, yes. I never knew if there was any truth to that or not. But I felt no danger whatsoever. I'm a person that's not scared. I shared with you at lunch my plane

rides. I'm a person of contradictions. I'm shy and a private person; yet my work has all been very public in the fish-bowl. I adjust to whatever is required of me. I've taken jobs where, you know, [it meant] flying to the Navajo reservation. Some of the professors will drive all day long, teach their course, stay in the reservation at night, and drive the next day. I'd go in a few minutes in a little plane, land in some ditch and get back. [Laughs] But I'm very time-conscious, so probably that's what pushed me; it wasn't that I wasn't afraid. But I've done it so much I'm not afraid. [Referring to the topic list] Major Honors and Awards—during the time, or my life?

Q: Oh, all through your life, yes.

JARAMILLO: Okay. I've gotten a lot of scholastic honors—starting with high school valedictorian, and those awards that I got at graduation; and graduating magna cum laude from the University; Master's with honors. And then I've just gotten a bunch of awards; just a bunch of them. When you get my vitae, the complete vitae, they're all listed. It is just a huge number. And I'm listed in every Who's Who of any kind and all that stuff.

Q: I know. Well, what about the Hondurans? I'm sure they didn't let you slip away.

JARAMILLO: Two. The Francisco Morazan, which is the highest award they give to a foreigner. Q: What is that for? For the good you've done the country?

JARAMILLO: Yes, that's for the good that you did for the country; for developing the relationships; for all this stuff. And then the second one is, they made me an honorary Honduran citizen.

Q: Did they! They couldn't do more than that, could they?

JARAMILLO: And they say that very few ambassadors—do you know what? It was a private ceremony because they told me that then the other ambassadors would be very upset. That [it] is saved for very special people, so I feel very privileged.

Q: Fantastic. Was that just before you left?

JARAMILLO: Yes.

Q: Can you describe that ceremony?

JARAMILLO: Oh, yes. It was a ceremony with—they asked the governor of that department, of that state, to conduct the ceremony. I had been told that they were going to make me an Honduran citizen, and I had told Fred so Fred had checked with the State Department to see if there were any problems, and they had said no, that it was okay. So then we went to the governor's office and all of her people [were there]. Heri and I were the only ones that went, and there was this ceremony where they read the rights of being an honorary Honduran citizen. It was real nice, and then she had a little reception. Oh, by the way, I'm a complete teetotaler, and I faked the liquor all through my stay.

Q: Oh, did you?

JARAMILLO: Yes. It was always 7-up and ginger ale to look like the champagne, the grape juice to look like the red wine; the whole bit. It was always a substitute. I told enough people when I got there. I'll tell you, I knew [when] I had arrived. The second party that I went to [at] the president's house, there's this young man carrying a tray of liquor, and he's giving everybody a cup and he puts the tray in front of me and he motions with his eyes and his mouth [laughter] which one for me to take. I picked it up and it had no liquor. I knew I had arrived; even the waiters were my friends. It was wonderful.

I didn't want to talk about it; I needed to do it very quietly. My husband is fast at it because he's put up with it. I didn't want it called attention to that I don't drink, so we'd find a way to substitute.

Q: Well, I can understand at your own dinners, but what did you do when you went to dinner parties with wine served? It was understood?

JARAMILLO: It was understood; it was understood.

Q: And you'd have grape juice.

JARAMILLO: The word got around. La Embajadora no toma. Some people, a few people, would say, “Oh, just taste it,” and I'd say, [whispers] “It makes me sick.” “Oh!” So then the word would get around, “She doesn't drink.” And since I was the only woman, it was okay. Now if I had been a man, I don't know if it would have been okay that I didn't drink in Latin America. But because I was a woman, it was okay.

Q: Is it considered manly down there to drink?

JARAMILLO: Partly. Yes, drinking is part of the macho image, although women drink, too. But in the American community, the word quickly got around: “Madam Ambassador doesn't drink,” and so everybody got something [non-alcoholic] for me. There were always a few Hondurans there and the word got around. Nobody ever said anything about it.

Q: Is this because of your health or because of religious reasons?

JARAMILLO: No.

Q: You just don't like it?

JARAMILLO: It is the craziest thing in the whole wide world. I have an allergy for alcohol. I can't even take cough syrup. It drives me batty. I take a drink of alcohol—when I was growing up, you know, when you first start dating and people start doing a little social drinking around, well, here comes Mari-Luci to try it out. And, geez, I took a sip and the whole world was spinning, and the headache, and my eyes. I thought: God, if that's what drinking's all about! So then I tried it a few times, and a sip will make my eyes get completely bloodshot, a second sip will give me a blinding headache;,a third sip knocks

me out—my spinal column. The alcohol goes to my brain immediately and my spinal column is just in a terrible pain.

I was so bound and determined that I wasn't to be Miss Goody Two-Shoes that I went to my family doctor once. I said, “Doctor, you know all my health problems. Do you know, I have a real problem. I cannot drink.” He said, “So what!” I said, “Doctor, you don't understand; I mean socially. I mean, a drink of wine with my dinner. I'm not talking about getting drunk; I'm talking about this kind of drinking.” He said that I could go through a period where I got desensitized, like putting, with a pin, a drop of liquor on my tongue, and then in 15 minutes, putting two drops, and go through a long period where I could desensitize. But he said, “Mari-Luci, with all the cases that I see of people coming in here that can't stop their drinking, I cannot understand a perfectly intelligent woman like you wanting to be able to drink. I think you ought to just learn to live with it.” And I said, “I can't. The pressure is awful. Everybody drinks. You go out to dinner and people say, 'Well, have a glass of wine.'” He kind of said, “Learn to live with it and you won't be sorry.” And I have learned to live with it, but I don't like to make a to-do about it.

Q: Of course not.

JARAMILLO: I don't want to tell people. The only way I tell people is if they insist that I drink; then I'll have to whisper, “Please don't say anything. I don't drink.” I thought that that would be a problem because in the diplomatic world there's so much liquor all over the place. Everything is with toasts. I learned to toast with my grape juice.

Q: Of course, of course. Are there any other last minute impressions or thoughts you'd like to share about your days in Honduras?

JARAMILLO: Well, I think it needs to be made clear that I really enjoyed my stay; that I'm a perfectionist and I'm never satisfied with my work. It is the first time that I felt that if they asked me to do it again, I would do it exactly the way I did it; I would change nothing. And that's the first time that has happened in my life, because, for example, if I write an article, I

always read it, and I think: “Oh, if only I had said it that way, or if I had changed this word.” I'm never satisfied. And that job, I'm satisfied. I know that it was—that I did it well, and that if I had to do it over, I'd do it exactly the same way.

People have asked me, “What kinds of things would you do differently because now you know what being an ambassador's all about?” And I say, “I think that my success was not having known.” Having approached it as a learning experience, I was all over the place, learning everything, and then just being me. That combination was what I would hope I could repeat again. I don't know if I'll be able to. If I were so lucky as to get invited again, I don't know that I could repeat it, because, by God, now I do know some things that maybe I would do differently, just simply because I know it. I call it my fairy tale. It was just an exciting time. Having been called to provide service for your country, when you've never thought of that, is just a very rewarding experience.

Q: Yes. Now your mother died while you were in Honduras?

JARAMILLO: My grandmother.

Q: Oh, your grandmother.

JARAMILLO: My mother is alive.

Q: Oh, wonderful. So she saw this—Somehow I thought she had died.

JARAMILLO: No, my mother is alive; she's 84 years old. She has Alzheimer's disease, so she's going through a difficult period. My husband is taking care of my mom today while I'm here.

Q: Oh, how nice!

JARAMILLO: He's a wonderful guy. My mom has no instant recall, but if you start talking to her about things that happened, then she'll recall some things. She had already started

being sick when we left, and she absolutely refused to go down there. Having refused to go down there led me to believe that something was wrong, and she didn't write a lot and we're very close friends. Sure enough, when I came back, that was some of the stuff that had been happening to her. But my little 96-year old grandmother died when I was in Honduras.

Q: I see. Were you able to come back for the funeral?

JARAMILLO: No, I wasn't, and I'll share with you why. I had only been in country three months when my grandmother died. I decided that if I came back, someone would say, “It's because she's a woman. “ And I decided not to, that I wasn't going to be able to help anyway. I had been very close to my grandmother.

My husband and I would visit her at least every other week, if not weekly, the 200-mile trip to be with her. We were very, very close. I felt that because we had been so close and had been together that it was okay that the last three months of her life I didn't see her. But my decision was, they'll say, “You see, you can't bring a woman down here. Her grandmother dies, for God's sake, she has to leave the post.” I decided that was something that I very consciously did.

Q: It's a little bit hard to be a pioneer, isn't it?

JARAMILLO: Yes, it is. You're conscious of it every single day; that whatever you do means another woman comes or another woman doesn't.

Q: Yes, very true.

JARAMILLO: Now, that ends my ambassador part. All right, let's move on to after having been Madam Ambassador for three years. [Laughter]

[Another topic] Lasting impact on U. S. host country relations: I think I left—I don't think on a personal level, but as a team effort from my embassy—I think that we left an impact

that, even if things have changed so drastically in the last few years, we made an impact that will never go away completely. We worked very hard in helping them become a democracy and, though right now the military are getting lots of support and it could be very easy for them to say, “We will take over power once again,” that they haven't, with these many years of us feeding them all. That support, I think, speaks well for us; that they did internalize the idea that it would be better for Honduras to have a democracy. I think that in an idealistic sense, in a way of an aspiration, an attitude, that that's what we influenced. I'm not as sure that it will be lasting if the problem continues in the area, and we continue the military buildup. I worry about big boys with big toys, and so I don't know. But up to now, I feel that we did make an impression.

The many, many people that have come to visit me from Honduras—many have come because they're invited through the State Department and they always ask to be sent to Albuquerque to visit me, so I have hosted a lot of them. All of them talk about what we did when we were there and that our work is something that they will always appreciate. I think the relations were much stronger, government-to-government and people-to-people, and it was people across socioeconomic lines. That's, I guess, what I'm most proud of, that I represented my country at all levels—not just what somebody was saying in Washington, but I also think that I tried to live the example of what American people are like. I was very proud of that. I think it will be as lasting as we let it be.

Q: That is certainly a wonderful success story. It is known as one of the big success stories for women throughout the Department. Did you leave at the end of the Carter Administration? I'm trying to find your dates here.

JARAMILLO: Okay. I left Honduras in September. By the way, we arrived September 19, 1977 and we left September 19, 1980. We were there three years to the day. Then we came back and went to Washington. Some of my mentors in the Department were wanting me to go as an ambassador to Bolivia, to help take care of the drug problems. I had hinted to my mentors—of course, this is all games that you play, of how you send the hints back

and forth—that I would be delighted. I thought that I could serve my country very well in that area, because I thought if there's anyone that can get information at that kind of level that I was primed for it. Our previous ambassador had been sent out persona non grata, so there wasn't very good feelings. It would have been a perfect time for me to come in and work. That was sort of a feel I had for what I was going to do. That was in September. I was made Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs and it was “a desk job.” It was not very well defined and I pretty much did what I wanted to do. But I continued my own studying and I branched out to study much more about Latin America, in general, and kind of move away a little bit from just Honduras, but be concentrating on others, because I was hopeful that I would get another assignment and go to another country; if not Bolivia, another one.

In October we started getting the message that it looked like Reagan was going to be very strong. In November we got the message that, indeed, he was strong and he had become president. There were many people within the State Department that told me they really liked my work and that they were so hopeful that I could stay. That was across the board; many, many people told me that. They felt that maybe I could stay, since some appointments had survived change of political parties, and so some people said, “Oh, you'll surely stay.” There was also the feeling that I would stay because there were so few Hispanics and because, obviously, I had been very successful and lots of the State Department people liked me a lot. But it turned out that the Republicans were not able; those Republicans that tried to help me find a way to stay were not successful because there seemed to be the attitude that if you hadn't supported Reagan directly—geez, the way it boils down—you're not a good American. That's the way I was being evaluated; that I had had nothing to do with Reagan and, therefore, I couldn't continue the service that I was providing for my country. There were enough people within the State Department that were telling me that there was a chance for a little while. Then, all of a sudden, I saw that there was an about-face of some people that had been encouraging me to not disappear

now not saying anything. I'm a very smart person and I caught on immediately: the tide has turned. Somewhere, somebody has said, “We're not going to keep her.”

I had decided that I would stay and honor my commitment, that I would stay until they told me to leave, but I was very scared of some of the things that I had seen and heard, the way they change when they have political changes in Washington, of somebody arriving to work and their desk has been cleared. I was just petrified of this happening, and yet, I felt this sense of honor that I had been invited to go and somewhere I would be told, “Thank you for your service. You have finished.” I wanted to end my stay perfect, because we had done so well, and I thought if I goof up now and they say, “Well, she left before da-da-da.” I didn't want to do that.

Q: Sure.

JARAMILLO: On the other hand, I was hearing so much that mine was a “political appointment,” and I kept saying, “It was not. It was a presidential appointment. There's a great deal of difference. It has nothing to with political parties.” But, of course, it did. So, I waited, and my husband was looking for a job in Washington. If my husband had found a job in Washington, we probably would have stayed in Washington, because I could have found something to do. Somehow, somewhere, I know I could have found something. But my husband had not worked for three years, so it got very difficult, and he couldn't find a job. We had decided that as soon as we got the word from someone, we would leave immediately.

Q: Were you tenured?

JARAMILLO: Yes, I was tenured at the University [of New Mexico]. So I called the president of the university and I told him, “It seems to me that I'm about to be told that my services are no longer required.” And I said, “But I'm a very good American and I've seen this government of ours almost come to a complete standstill while they argue whose going to get what, and I'm going to stay here as long as I think that there's a possibility

that I might be influential in what's going on. But I want you to know that it seems to me that it's getting close to the time when I go back. I'd like you to know that I think, by all means, I'll be back in the fall," because that would give me the summer to get ready. This was in March that I called him. Yes, I called him in March and I said, "They haven't told me anything, but I'm picking up vibes." He said, "Mari-Luci, you're good at that." I said, "I'll keep you posted but I think you need to find me my job back in the fall." And he said, "No. If you decide to come, you just call me and I'll have a job for you when you get back."

Q: Well, that's quite something.

JARAMILLO: I'd been gone four years, you know?

Q: Yes.

JARAMILLO: I said, "Thank you," and I said to Heri, "We're all set. We'll just wait for the shoe to fall now. That way we'll end it. I was asked to come and until I was told to go I won't go." But by then it had gotten very obvious. Oh, the politics were rampant and I didn't like that at all. It was a feeling like all the good stuff that you knew about the government was disintegrating in front of [your] eyes and that because a Democratic president had sent me, I was being sent home. I thought: "Hmm, the one in Japan (Michael J. Mansfield —formerly U.S. senator (Montana).) isn't being sent home." Right? In fact, he's still there.

Q: Yes.

JARAMILLO: And he has survived administration after administration—whether Republican or Democrat. So I tried to find if any women that had been presidential appointees had survived administrations, and I thought: "Ah-ha, it's because I'm a woman."

Q: I don't believe so. I don't think it was just because you were a woman. As I understand it, they make lists of who has to go when the new people come in. Now it could be that somebody wanted your job, and that's why you had to go.

JARAMILLO: Well, I don't know.

Q: But the men get dropped, too, you know.

JARAMILLO: Yes, yes.

Q: Presidential appointees.

JARAMILLO: But here was one woman—the one very successful woman—

Q: Oh, I'm not saying that it couldn't be.

JARAMILLO: —in Latin America. And everybody was saying in the State Department that's why I should stay. You know?

Q: Yes.

JARAMILLO: And nobody was paying attention to that. I was very close with the person that I thought was the one that was going to tell me; he was in administration. I had said, “The minute you hear something, tell me right away.” Sure enough, he said, “Mari-Luci, I think that it's better,” because it was ready to happen. I said, “Fine.” So I called Heri and I said, “This is it.” But we had already prepared ourselves psychologically. We were ready to move immediately. We had our car ready, we had everything in boxes from our apartment, we were ready to load and come. So we left and we drove down. We drove straight through. We just stopped one night to rest a few hours and then we took turns driving and came straight home.

Q: Now nobody actually said to you, “Go.” You put in a resignation.

JARAMILLO: I really think that it was a way of saying “Go.” Only that he was my friend and he put it nicely..

Q: Yes, but it wasn't the formal notice—the pink slip on your desk.

JARAMILLO: No, no. But I think that because of our relationship he—

Q: He was letting you know.

JARAMILLO: Yes, that it's time for you to go. I don't remember that he showed me anything in writing. I think then I got the confirmation in writing, but at the time it was handled a little bit differently, but because I knew him. I don't think for any other reason.

Q: My understanding of this [Reagan] administration is that a memo was sent out from the White House that they wanted an assistant secretary and at least one DAS in every single department.

JARAMILLO: Yes. So I came back. My university was ready to greet me with open arms. It was just wonderful. It was a beautiful coming home. Had lots of community parties for me. The Albuquerque-Hispano Chamber of Commerce gave me a party. It was just really, really nice—lots of welcoming. The president told me I could go to work immediately. So, I said, “Fine. I've got to get back and find out, number one, what this country is doing internally. Number two, I've got to find out about the campus. Number three, I've got to update myself in my field, so I can teach.” I hadn't taught that length of time, so I was out of date with my literature. I don't remember if I stayed home a couple of weeks, maybe, but I went back to work.

Q: Just like that!

JARAMILLO: Went right back, but then they didn't put me in the college; they made me—the president made me an assistant to him.

Q: To him? I see.

JARAMILLO: So I got moved into the president's office as assistant to the president, and I was completely free. He asked me to represent him in a lot of things. I went to a lot of lunches with legislators and that kind of thing—kind of P.R. for awhile, until I plunked down again and found the library and started going to the library again. I didn't have any problems in returning to the United States because I had not internalized the limousine and the driver, and the guard, and the cook, and the gardeners. I had told myself everyday, “This might be the last day,” and so, I didn't have any problems. What I did have a problem was with the cold in Washington. It was terrible. Something happened to me while I was in Honduras that when I came back and it was so cold, I would just turn livid; it was just awful. I've developed some kind of a disease where my arteries in my hands and in my knees close up with the cold.

Q: Reynaud's Syndrome.

JARAMILLO: There you go. And it is awful. In Washington, I was so doubled up, and I was on the north side of that State Department [building] and I just would freeze. The secretaries were wonderful with me, and they found ways of warming me up. Oh, it was awful, but that was my one adjustment. My one adjustment was the cold.

Q: Didn't you miss being chauffeured around, or do you like to drive yourself?

JARAMILLO: I like to drive and I hadn't driven for three years. I love to drive, so that was fun. I was in control of my life again, you know. I went via the route I wanted. I didn't miss that. I had told myself that all those niceties were just on loan, so I hadn't internalized them. I think that it was interesting how much I really enjoyed our privacy. Heri and I were alone again in an apartment. We ate what we wanted to eat. We could eat informally if we wanted to; we could just have pizza from the carton if we wanted to; drink water from the faucet—do all these things that you forget is the normal part. I like to do my own housework and my own everything, so that was just getting back into it. I'm a frustrated interior decorator, so I tried to do things with the apartment we were in. When we came

home, we stayed a few weeks with my sister and my brother-in-law while our home was vacated, because we had a lease and we had to go through the problems of trying to get the renter to leave, and then cleaning up the house. Then got terribly busy with the new job and setting up the house, so that quickly we were on into kind of the day-to-day kinds of things, and pinching myself, “Were we really in Honduras?” Because it had been so much fun.

So that's where I am. Next Assignments—I have thought that if the Democrats win, I think I have a very good chance of going back.

Q: I would think so.

JARAMILLO: If it's within—if it's this next time. If it's further down the road, I don't know. I think that an ambassador needs to be terribly alert, and it just seems to me that if you're 150 years old you're not an excellent ambassador. I would love to go; I think I would have a very good chance of at least being nominated. I don't know that I'd get through the Senate, but at least being nominated.

Thoughts About Growing Old—I don't have many other than, when I retire, I want to live where it's warm and in a small house, all on one floor, and I want to be able to continue my gardening. I don't want a big yard, so I might learn how to do container gardening and window ledge gardening—that kind of thing. I want to write a lot. That's what I want to do when I retire; I want to write.

Q: Do you have your books planned, in addition to the one you've already written, but not published?

JARAMILLO: Oh, yes; oh, yes. I've thought a lot about what I want to write; what kind of searches I want to do, what kind of studies. Right now, I'm running a large research project on Hispanic families in the poorest barrio in Albuquerque. I got funding from a foundation in Holland.

Q: In Holland? Why do the Dutch want to know about an Hispanic family in Albuquerque?

JARAMILLO: I had a friend who served on the board who was my mentor.

Q: A Dutchman?

JARAMILLO: No, an American professor who served on the board of the foundation. They had a world conference in Spain, and so my friend convinced them to invite me to come to speak about Hispanics and education. I went, and they liked what they heard, and so I got some money for my research project. It's been going on for three years.

Q: Tell me more about it. What sort of researching are you doing?

JARAMILLO: I'm researching the strengths of poor Hispanic families. All the studies that have been done in this country are to find out what's wrong with poor parents; I'm looking for the strengths. I'm saying that there is something they do right. And so we're looking for that that they do right, that in the poorest barrio, some kids make it and some kids don't. We want to find out what happened in the homes to nurture those kids that made it—kind of a la Mari-Luci.

That's what I'm trying to find out, and when we find out those things, then we're going to try to get those parents to teach other parents, to see if we can get a nucleus going in the barrio of parents who are really excited about education and supporting education, even though they're not educated. What you really hear is, I'm studying my life.

Q: Yes, yes. Are you doing this through statistical methods, or are you interviewing people?

JARAMILLO: Up to now, we're collecting all kinds of data. We've administered lots of little tests, check sheets, standardized kinds of things, and lots of anecdotal information. We've now been at it three years. A psychologist is now going to come in and tell us how we

can, in very structured ways, look at the next three years of my project. So that we have anecdotal data while we're getting going, and then three very seriously controlled data for the end of my project.

Q: What a wonderful project!

JARAMILLO: So that's what I'm doing on the side. [Laughter]

Q: On the side? That's just a little "throw-away?"

JARAMILLO: Yes, that's the little extra so that I don't grow old sitting in my chair. [Laughter]Q: What other things do you want to write about?

JARAMILLO: Well, I want to write about Hispanics and education. I want to write about subtle racism in the United States. I want to write about the influence of mentors on poor children. I want to write about the influence of mentors at the career stage, because that's when my mentors were the greatest. It was already when I had finished. I'm very interested in how people, quote, that are educated can be racist, and I don't know how to get at it. But that fascinates me because I used to believe in my naive days that if people were educated there would be no racism. And now I hear people with credentials that say they're not racist, but behave racist.

I would like to write something about, really in a serious way, research the need to change the attitude of our country that English is good enough to communicate with God. We need multilingual people in the society, and the English-only movement that's going on in this country is driving me insane. I want so badly to be able to get out and do something, because this narrow mentality that we don't have to learn other people's ways and other people's languages, I think, is going to do our country in. Other powers in this world are doing that and we're not. We keep saying, "Well, we don't have money for this and we don't have money for that." Our priorities are all mixed up. I think in this country all children could grow up bilingual, and tri-lingual, and multi-lingual because we have everything

around you, but the society doesn't value it. And so I'd like to get into that in a very serious way.

Q: Yes. On the other side of that question is the problem of polarizing the country by too much emphasis on not having people bilingual, but having them speak only one language. This group speak one, and this group speak another.

JARAMILLO: That will never happen in this country because you need English to survive.

Q: Do you think that will continue?

JARAMILLO: Yes. See, people will say, like in Canada, that you broke the French Canadians from using it. Well, what the heck! The British Canadians had all the power and all the money and the French Canadians were the underdogs. Of course there was a fight. It wasn't about language. Language was the symbol of the whole problem. But if you have access to the economic goods of this country and you have access to an education, there's nobody that's going to be a fool and say, “I'm not going to learn English. “ It's just not going to happen. Now, they will continue in enclaves if that's the only place where they get any kind of satisfaction as human beings because there's nothing out there for them.

Q: But they will continue to be second- or third-class people if they do that.

JARAMILLO: That's right; that's right. Always, always, and so I don't see that happening. I travel this country and everybody wants to learn English, but there's no money for teachers; there's no money for this; there's no money for that. And they're extremely poor and they don't have a way to get on the bus and go wherever it is that they are— So, again, we don't put the emphasis. But we don't teach English by killing off native languages. That's the other mistake people are making.

Q: No, no, because it's such an enrichment.

JARAMILLO: So both of these [are] areas that I have an interest in, and if you can see, some of it is education, some of it is relationships, some of it is in large social context, some of it is in local, but it all about opening up the opportunity structure so that all Americans can participate. I love this country, and if only a few can participate in the dream, we're in trouble. My feeling is it shouldn't be so darn hard to participate in the American dream. What makes it hard is racist attitudes, the “buddy system.” If you have access to something, then your next generation has access to something. If I didn't have, then my next generation doesn't have, and it just keeps getting bigger and bigger.

Q: Do you think there is developing a two-class society now?

JARAMILLO: Uh-hmm.

Q: Do you think it's getting worse?

JARAMILLO: The class society that we see in Latin America is being developed in this country.

Q: Do you agree with that?

JARAMILLO: I think so. The beauty of this country has been the large middle class that comes out from the bottom class, and in two, three generations, you're in the middle class. I don't see that if the government doesn't help. I don't see the masses of people, of the poor people in this country being able to move into the middle class if they're not getting good education.

Q: And the middle class just dries up and you have the rich and the poor.

JARAMILLO: The rich and masses of poor. Leaving a small rich group of people that are filthy rich and then the huge masses of people, stealing right and left because there's no other way to earn a living. You see that now already in so many of our sections where

you never had crime and now you have all kinds of crime. People are not employed if people don't have the skills to be employed. If people aren't educated, if there are no opportunities, then what else do you do? Build another prison, seems to be— God!

Q: Spend the money on that.

JARAMILLO: That's right. Anyway, that's some of the things that I'd like to write about. And continue studying. When will I retire? By law, in New Mexico, I have to retire at the age of 65, as a university professor. I'm 58 now, so that gives me seven more years of service. I have a lot of neat job offers from a lot of places, and sometimes I get tempted to even want to look at them, and then I think, no, I'm so happy where I'm at. Probably, the only thing that would draw me away from the university setting would be something in the diplomatic world, and it doesn't have to be as ambassador. I would love to work in a political section of some country, if they would just let me go and be that extra set of ears and legs.

Q: Would you want to work in a job in Washington, say in HEW?

JARAMILLO: Well, maybe not HEW, but maybe in a job in the State Department. I'd like it more related—

Q: To international affairs?

JARAMILLO: Yes, that's what I would really like. I'd like to work with AID or a political officer in some embassy in Latin America. I know I can provide a service for my country and I'm trying to figure out how I could latch in. It doesn't have to be the ambassador per se. I would love it if it were, but it doesn't have to be. My problem is, my husband and I come in as a couple and both of us want to be employed, and that becomes a big old hassle. Like how can we both work in AID unless the jobs are very different? But anyway, those are the kinds of things that we've been thinking about.

Q: What exactly are you doing now as the vice president in charge of students affairs?

JARAMILLO: Okay. I have a staff of 300 professionals and 300 work-study students. It's a total of 600 people that work in my division, and we are responsible for all activities that do not take place in the classroom; everything that's non-academic. So that means from fraternities, sororities, dormitories, student union, health center—you name it; anything to do with students outside of the classroom comes under my purview. It's a fascinating job in the sense that you never have the same problem twice. It's always a different problem and you're trying to figure out another way out of it. On the other hand, it is not satisfying my soul. It's sort of a glorified clerk. It doesn't have thought to it. You have to react. The student got short-changed so you go and fix it up and you find out who short-changed him. It doesn't take much thought; it doesn't take a formulation of policy.

It's not satisfying me, and I'm interim. We had a change of presidents. The president that brought me in as interim has left and we have another one, and because it's not satisfying me, I'm just about ready not to apply for the permanent position because I need to nurture my soul. The stuff that I do, I want it to have—I think that's why I liked the Ambassador's role. It had substance to what you did, and you had to use your gray matter to think through and think of possibilities. And this—it's just—it's always—it's a student that has been short-changed or a parent that is mad because a student didn't get this.

Q: All little details.

JARAMILLO: There's more. I think I'm at a stage in my profession where I shouldn't be wasting my time like that. I really do.

Q: [You should be] dealing with the bigger issues.

JARAMILLO: Yes. Again, I was asked by the president to come, that he needed me—they had had some problems—and so I said, “Sure, I'll help out.” But I've never aspired to something like that. And so I'm thinking very seriously of not doing it. You're the first

person that I've talked to about this. Not even my secretaries know—my husband does—that I'm leaning toward that, and I have to make that decision within a couple of weeks.

Q: Oh, really? That soon? Did you enjoy the position as associate dean for the college of education?

JARAMILLO: Oh, yes! I've enjoyed every position, including this one, but lately I have started to question if I am getting the most out of life by doing this. It just seems that—

Q: You've been on a continuum up.

JARAMILLO: Yes. See, this is a high position and everybody thinks, “Oh, my God, a vice president!” But I think, “Wait a minute. I don't give a darn about titles. What satisfies my soul is the kind of work that you're doing. The Dean—yes, you worked, and you developed programs, and you analyzed them, you evaluated them, you got faculty excited about working on projects, you told the world about what you were doing, you had relationships with the Department of Education. You know, meaty, heavy things. But this one I'm not very comfortable with, okay? So I wanted you to know that.

Q: You've been doing it two years now?

JARAMILLO: Yes, but as interim, so that I can, in a couple of weeks, say, “I have served as interim and the new person needs to be selected now as permanent.” And so I have a nice out. I think it's going to work out for me. I don't want to be stuck in that for seven years.

Q: Oh, I see, they're five-year appointments?

JARAMILLO: Oh, yes. If you accept something like that you have to at least commit five or six years, and since forced retirement will be in seven, I just have to—

Q: It would preclude really any other major step.

JARAMILLO: That's right. I would feel that if I went after the permanent vice president, and some job offer came up, I couldn't, in good conscience, accept it, because then my university has to go through the process of seeking again, and it's just not fair. And I'm not that pleased. I like what I do; but it has no substance. So, anyway . . .

Okay, [reading topic subject] Current Attitude Towards Women's Movement—I think my attitude toward the women's movement has been an interesting one. I think the ones that have profited the most from the women's movement have been your middle-class women. I think the rich women already have had the freedom of doing whatever they darn please, whenever, and I think the lower social class women have not profited from it because they're still trapped in poverty. So I think that the movement has affected the largest group within the middle class and that's great, because those middle class women have been able to do lots of different things and move up the scale and do exciting things that maybe they wouldn't have had they not been alive during the movement.

From an Hispanic woman's point of view, I think the movement has been very good, but it's not as influential as it could have been if ethnic minority women had been involved in the beginning movement. I think that it was very Anglo-oriented at the beginning; very threatening to the subgroups that were—that our tasks were very divided between men and women. The strategies that they used at the beginning to call attention were not acceptable to the Hispanic woman, and so it took a long time for the Hispanic woman to come aboard. I think now the Hispanic women that have come aboard are middle-class, professional, working women. I think there's been tremendous change in the Hispanic home regarding women because of the women's movement, but it's not a big, overt thing that you can say, this has changed, but little subtle things, like the tasks were so divided between male/female roles and those are blending now, and people doing each other's roles, and that kind of thing. So I think it's been very helpful, but, as a whole, Hispanics don't see that much help from the women's movement in jobs, because what

has happened to many Hispanic people, Anglo-males have retired and Anglo-females have taken the job.

Q: Ah, that's very interesting.

JARAMILLO: So you don't see the kind of movement that people, say, Anglo-women see, because they see themselves up there, but there hasn't been that much for the Hispanic women. However, like I say, I think it is making a tremendous difference for Hispanic women in the home in subtle little ways. Definitely, for middle-class Hispanic women, there's a lot of movement. I see university women studying subjects they would have never studied before. But, again, most of those Hispanic women at the university are middle-class already; their parents already had an education. So maybe, just the tenor of the times, they would have been studying these new things. You don't know. But whatever, I'm glad the women's movement came.

I saw it even in the most desolate places out in rural Honduras. I saw women talking about the rights of women. It is this worldwide movement and sometimes we tend to think that it's an American movement. It's a worldwide movement and American women were kind of Johnny-come-latelies, really. There had been so much movement in Europe already about women. I think it's wonderful. I've participated much more in the ethnic movements than I have openly in the women's movement.

Q: Do you think that it's still on the rise? That is to say, the gains that have been made can't be lost now?

JARAMILLO: Oh, I don't think they can be lost. I really don't, no. Even if the government dismantles everything and I think this administration—federal administration—has not been supportive of women at all, and I worry a lot about the women that think that they are and I think, “You're being used. Can't you see that in general terms they're not doing anything for women?”

Q: Or children. JARAMILLO: Oh, no. Children are forgotten in this society. The poorer children are forgotten in this society.

Oh, well! Okay. [reading] Affiliations with Religious Groups, Sororities, Political and Other Groups—Lots of affiliations with civic groups. I belong to LULAC; I belong to the Hispano Chamber of Commerce. Then I'll give you the list of all the boards that I belong to, like Children's Television Workshop. I serve on that. I've served on that since I came back. I'm the president of the Board of Trustees of a policy think-tank in Claremont University in California. I'm doing a lot of exciting things.

Q: Aren't you, though? No wonder you're hopping all over the world. How exciting!

JARAMILLO: Very exciting. Volunteer work, community groups: I volunteer in the sense that I speak everywhere that I possibly can to poor people—parents, high school kids; I work a lot there. Through my Hispanic organizations, I do community work. Again, mostly now it's in the keynoting, the speaking, as opposed to working on the workshop level.

[reading] Second Thoughts about Career; Recommended Changes—If I had found out about the Foreign Service when I was young, I am sure I would have joined it. I just loved it. Too bad that I never heard about it.

[reading] Future for Women in the Service—I thought their future was great from what I saw from '77 to '80. There were all kinds of opportunities. I saw that internship program in AID that was just wonderful, to teach them while they're earning so that they could move on ahead. I saw people being very conscious that they had women in every place. They were talking more and more about it. I watched men changing their vocabulary from saying “he” to saying “he or she. “ There's lots of little subtle things that you could see that I was very encouraged. I was very encouraged with the movement of helping the women when they came back from overseas, and setting up that office in the State Department to help.

I thought that was wonderful; that that was so needed, because the women had been shuttled around, back and forth.

Q: You mean the wives?

JARAMILLO: The wives, yes.

Q: And they have the Family Liaison [Office] and all that sort of thing.

JARAMILLO: Right, in every embassy. All that, I think, is all just wonderful.

[reading] Future Role of Ambassadors—I have mixed feelings about it, because I saw when I was there—not in my embassy, because things were going well enough that nobody else was going to critique, but I saw a lot of shots being called out from Washington.

Q: Yes. That's why that question's there.

JARAMILLO: I thought: “Who needs this?” See, again, I get to the glorified clerk. The ambassador's going to become a glorified clerk if all he has to do is, somebody pulls the string from Washington and there he goes. The ambassador is the one that knows what's going on locally, and those monkeys up there should pay attention to him. It should be the other way around, and yet, I saw an awful lot of—they would decide over there what it should look like and then you were supposed to fit in. Like I say, I'm very glad that didn't happen in my country, but I saw it enough in others, because I would get to see the [cable] traffic.

I think that as they're pulling funds away from the Foreign Service, and they're starting to reduce, reduce, reduce, it might be that it will reduce to the point where you would have maybe the roving ambassadors coming out of Washington, and heading [the embassy would be a] lesser person, [who] doesn't make the kinds of decisions that Ambassadors now make. That's a possibility. I think that would be wrong. I do think that tiny little

countries don't need ambassadors. I do think that an ambassador can serve four and five small countries. I don't think we need one in each place, but I think if we're going to have an ambassador, the ambassador should be given credit for having some brains. [Laughs]

Q: What do you do about the little countries now that have been used to an ambassador? Aren't they going to feel very hurt?

JARAMILLO: They'll feel just as hurt as all the cities felt all over the world when we canceled our consular offices. Remember when we did a savings by cutting out I don't know how many, and they felt, “Geez, we don't have any connections with the Americans anymore?” There was a feeling of hurt, and you had to travel far to go to a consular office, but it had to be done. I think that it has to be done, but I think it has to be done with lots of tact. You say, “We have problems, funding problems.”

[It needs to be done] for two reasons: one is funding problems that this country has, and the other one is the state of the new communications. It used to be that it was only the ambassador that knew about the problem. Now sometimes somebody will find out through the communications something that the ambassador didn't know. So because of how tiny our world is getting because of communication, and the funding problems, we might have to go to something like that. But I do think that human communication is so important with these countries. I think whatever they call the person—whether they call him an ambassador or something else, that person be given the opportunity to be able to reach out to people and explain policy in personal, humanistic terms so that they understand the policy, and that we in turn have those kinds of people to translate these policies for us because it's very different to see something in writing than to see the interpretation of people.

Q: This is a little off the subject, but it's all part of the same problem: With the rise in terrorism and the building of new embassies that are almost mini-fortresses, how much is this going to impede the ambassador from doing his job?

JARAMILLO: I think it impedes it something terrible, and I think that if we're going to be locked up—see that's why I fought while I was in Honduras that we not make it a fortress. It was already becoming fortresses all around, and I said, “If we need that, then what we need here is a military presence to defend us. Is that what we want?” We want something so that we can open up economic opportunities for us, so that we can encourage budding democracies (end of tape)-

I'm very concerned that if it's a group of people that are locked behind walls—I don't understand how they're doing their job, because their job has been outside. If it's going to be in a walled city, you might as well do it from Washington because then you're doing it by telephone and cable. The personal dimension is lost.

Q: Which is why you have an embassy in the first place.

JARAMILLO: That's right.

I don't really have too much to say about the Impact of the Proliferation of Other Agencies because I don't know enough about it, but I do think that we have to focus ourselves a little bit. We're all over the place, with everybody saying everything they darn please, and I do think when anybody speaks, they speak with authority and it represents somebody's view of what's going on at the time. If there's good coordination, I wouldn't care if there were a duplication of agencies, but the way I see it now, it becomes turf and then everybody wants to be the head turf and so everybody's always fighting. Everybody's building up the little empires.

Q: A prime example of what this means is what is happening now, with the CIA taking over part of State's prerogatives, the National Security Council, et cetera. . . [Refers to Iran-Contra]

JARAMILLO: That's right, that's right. Then you're not focused and—

Q: State doesn't do its job then.

JARAMILLO: No. Then Shultz is told after the fact. I think he should have quit right there. We can't have people that get bossed around like that heading our foreign policy, because that's a terrible message out there. That's why I admire some of the men that have preceded him who have quit and who have said, “Hey, we can't do this.”

Q: Well, Vance did.

JARAMILLO: Yes, he did.

Q: He disagreed with the [Carter] attempt to rescue the hostages.

JARAMILLO: Yes, and that was it. He said, “In order for us to be able to do this, we have to trust each other completely, and each other's judgment has to be respected, and I can't do this.” That's what worries me, that there's no coordination and that everybody takes their little bite. Everybody has the president's ear and the State Department doesn't do anything. Then as a consequence, everybody laughs because the State Department was the last to learn about it. Well, the way the system is set up, they're going to continue doing that.

Q: Do you think that's something that can be mandated, legislated, or do you think it depends entirely on who becomes the head of the administration?

JARAMILLO: I think it should be legislated, because if it's by law, it takes these persons a lot longer to mess around with the laws, although I've noticed that they're pretty good at dismantling that, too.

Q: Or if they don't like what the legislation is, they just do it anyway.

JARAMILLO: Do it another way. I think that that would be the best one. Mandated just leaves it open for the next guy that comes to change. [reading] Special Contributions to Service Attributable to Female Sex.

Q: What do you think women bring to the Foreign Service?

JARAMILLO: I think we talked about that a little while ago, that because we've been raised right or wrong, the way we've been socialized, we bring an extra sensitivity to people. We bring the whole nurturing concept. We bring the whole concept of “Let's talk it out,” instead of conflict. I think those are all traits that women have had up to now. Now, I don't know if the women's movement is changing that, and now we're raising men and women that are going to be same, but up to now, the way we were traditionally brought up, that's the element that we were bringing. Another thing is, being kind of the second-class citizen gives you an insight into how the other guy feels that some of the men don't seem to have. We have it in large quantities, so that I think we bring that.

Q: Do you think women, perhaps, for that very reason would be better utilized in certain parts of the world?

JARAMILLO: I think so; I think so. For example, I don't see women ambassadors being very effective in the Middle East, where women are nothing. Now, if we want to make a cause and make a statement and we send one, all we can do is make a cause and a statement, but we're not going to be very effective because you're not going to get any work done. But in other areas I think that they would be just excellent, [and in general] there should be no difference whether a man went or a woman.

Q: You don't think the world ought to be divided into men's posts and women's posts?

JARAMILLO: No, no. No way, but I do think that occasionally a post needs a particular kind of person, and at that time it should be decided that this person has the skills. You know, we might have some men with great nurturing skills and great tact but, in general,

I think that the society in the United States has told men, “You go out and be competitive and combative.” And with us [women], “You learn to behave and be nice.” And so that's going to make a difference of how you handle problems.

[Reading] Advice to Women as Aspirants for a Foreign Service Career—I would say get a broad, broad, broad education so that regardless of what comes up, you're ready for it. A broad liberal arts background. Don't specialize early on. Don't become a mathematician, or a historian, or a sociologist. Don't do that until you get your advanced degree. I would say that that's the most important.

The other one is learning all you can in the way of other people's cultures, and learning as many languages as you can before you get there. Even if they're not perfected, they can be perfected easily, but it's difficult to start from scratch if you haven't had some playing around with languages. I think those are important. You don't become knowledgeable about the world overnight. You develop an attitude that you're interested in the world, so I think that's something else that women have to know. You've got to be interested in current events. You've got to be interested in what's happening in the world, not just in your area. So many people are geographically bound. As I advise women, and by the way, I recommend a lot of people for the Foreign Service and they have sent me packets. I'm constantly talking to people about the Foreign Service. Three of the students that I know took the test this last go-around. I'm really playing it up. I think probably that's advice for everybody, but women, because they've been left out traditionally, should certainly get this information. Now, [reading] Most Significant Achievements in Your Life—I think having gotten an education is a significant achievement in my life because it was difficult to get an education under the conditions in which I lived. I think it was a real achievement that I did not become a bitter person. I have a lot of friends that have gone [through] the same experiences that I've gone [through] and they've got a chip on their shoulder, and I'm very fortunate that I don't have a chip on my shoulder; that all these problems I kind of look at by attacking them from an educational point of view or an attitudinal point of view and that I never say, “You do that to me because you hate me” or “You do that to me because of

this." I always try to put it in a context and understand and go from there. I think another one of my achievements, probably, is having been able to develop such wonderful relationships with everybody I come in contact with. I think that's an achievement that not everybody has. People will have worked with other people and not know anything about them.

Q: And not care.

JARAMILLO: I know. I can't get over that. So in that way I think those are my achievements. One last one, having been a world traveler. Having grown up so poor in a tiny little town in northern New Mexico and now there are very few people, only if they've been in the military or the Foreign Service, have they traveled more than I have.

Q: Yes. Yes, I can believe it.

JARAMILLO: There we go. Now, what kind of extra questions do you have? [Laughter]

Q: Well, you have done remarkably well and you still look as fresh as when we started. I wondered, on this business of changing roles in society, how do you feel about having a male secretary?

JARAMILLO: Fine.

Q: Fine? No problem?

JARAMILLO: No problem whatsoever. My associate is male. My DCM was male. I've never had a male secretary, but there was a male secretary where I worked. He wasn't my secretary. Super, super person.

Q: Do you approve of a panel to review ambassadorial appointments, such as Jimmy Carter had?

JARAMILLO: Yes, yes, because I think that that way they get an initial screening. From what I understand, it's a tough screening to survive that one, so that the best go up and then get a second screening at another level.

Q: You mean with the Senate as the second one?

JARAMILLO: Yes. So you get kind of two instead of just the president saying, “Go.” I think that helps. I think you have to be careful who you send.

Q: Indeed you do. I think we've covered everything I had.

JARAMILLO: Wonderful! [Laughs]

Q: And I want to thank you for a delightful day.

JARAMILLO: Well, I guess this was a day of just talking; it's neat. And you reminded me of lots of things that were very important in my life. Thank you.

Q: Well, thank you.

End of interview